

# POLITICAL PAPERS,

288/30  
COMPRISING THE

## CORRESPONDENCE

OF

## SEVERAL DISTINGUISHED PERSONS

IN THE YEARS 1792, 1793. &c.

WITH THE

## EDITOR,

THE

*Rev. CHRISTOPHER WYVILL,*

CHAIRMAN OF THE LATE COMMITTEE OF ASSOCIATION  
OF THE COUNTY OF YORK.

VOLUME V.

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AND J. TODD, YORK.

# POLITICAL PAPERS

CONTAINING THE

## CORRESPONDENCE

SEVERAL DISTINGUISHED PERSONS

IN THE



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CHAIRMAN OF THE  
OF THE

VOLUME

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## Errors to be corrected.

At page 42, the 22d line from the bottom, for "The Independent Gentlemen" read "Several of the Independent Gentlemen."

At page 79, immediately after "Number II." insert the words "Containing the Editor's Correspondence with Earl Stanhope, in the years 1792 and 1793."

At page 329, immediately after "Number X." insert the words "Containing the Editor's Correspondence with William Smith, Esq; M. P. and William Stuckland, Esq; on the subject of the Editor's Letter to the Right Hon. William Pitt, printed in 1793."

The smaller errors of the press, it is feared, are numerous; they are left to the candour of the Reader.

## ADVERTISEMENT

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## ADVERTISEMENT

TO

THE READER.

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THE publication of the Fourth Volume of his Political Papers in the year 1802, completed the Editor's original design; which was, by the production of every material document of the Yorkshire Committee, &c. to justify the Body of Reformers with whom he had corresponded and acted from near the end of the year 1779 to the end of the year 1786; from the first proposal to the Yorkshire Gentlemen in November, 1779, to hold a County Meeting, with a view to obtain a Reform of Parliament, to the close of the year 1786, when the enterprise was abandoned by the Counties, &c. which had co-operated with the Yorkshire Committee, and the dissolution of that Body tacitly took place.

From the close of that year to 1792, no political event occurred in this Country which could encourage the Friends of Constitutional Reform to renew their attempt. But in that year the controversies which had arisen among us, as the natural consequence of the Revolution in France, seemed to afford some probability

#### ADVERTISEMENT.

lity of success to measures of Political Reform, planned on principles of moderation, and conducted with a due conformity to the laws: and the danger which at that time threatened our Constitution, from the tendency to the most unwarrantable extremes of innovation on either hand, from the conflict of opposite Parties, whether inclined to Republican Liberty, or disposed to favour unlimited Monarchy, loudly called on the real Friends of Constitutional Liberty once more to interpose, at least to save the Constitution, if they could not improve it. The call was not heard with indifference in Parliament; a small, but illustrious Band of Patriots stood forth, the avowed advocates of the Constitution, on its genuine principles. A new Association of Friends of the People was formed out of Parliament, and the enterprise of Political Reform was again brought forward, and pursued with equal ability and perseverance. How unavailing those meritorious efforts have been, it is needless here to lament; as it is superfluous to state to what a ruined condition the Constitution has been reduced by the growth of Ministerial patronage, by the immense increase of our Army, by the insecurity of the Press, by the infringement of the Bill of Rights, by the altered law of libels, and by the repeated precedent of a denial of Free Petition to the People. Yet even this ruined condition of the Constitution, and, under it, the apathy of the public mind, which is still more discouraging, ought not to deject the Friends of their Country and sink them to despair. Events have thus low degraded

#### ADVERTISEMENT.

graded the Nation; but events may again produce its elevation to a level with the free spirit of our genuine Constitution. In this hope, and with a view to rescue the character of those men in Parliament and out of it, who, during the period alluded to, have been too successfully calumniated as enemies to their Country and its Constitution, at the time when they alone adhered to its genuine principles, this Volume and a subsequent one will be presented to the Public. They will be found to contain a long series of letters written by the Editor, or which he had the honour to receive from many of our public men; among whom are some distinguished by the union of the sincerest Patriotism, with the most extraordinary talents as Orators and Statesmen; and from a still greater number of private men of a truly public spirit, whose benevolent zeal for the welfare of their fellow-men, prompted them to quit their retirement, to stand forward, and to support the measures of the Patriotic Band in Parliament.

Of those letters which the Editor received from so many honourable persons, nearly all were private letters, which their Authors, if living, have permitted the Editor to publish: and it is presumed that letters written, in many instances, with all the confidence of friendship, in every instance with no view to their publication, will be considered as manifesting the real and undisguised sentiments of their writers, generally at least, if not in every case; and consequently, they will obtain that weight with the Public which no Papers composed for

## ADVERTISEMENT.

for the purpose of being submitted to its inspection could be thought to deserve. And coming from persons of the different classes described, they seem to be numerous enough to form a fair specimen of the temper and views of the whole Body of our moderate Reformers; and candid men will probably admit their character to be sufficiently ascertained and decided by this Correspondence.

If the letters addressed to the Editor, which will be produced in the two Volumes, exhibit an anxious wish in the minds of his Correspondents to secure the Liberty of their Country, by effecting a moderate Reform of Parliament by regular and legal means; and if no symptom of latent disaffection, or of a secret wish to excite commotion, to introduce a Republican Government, or to bring forward measures of a Revolutionary tendency, can be discovered in this long and varied series of letters, his Correspondents will stand acquitted in the judgment of the Nation, now cooled by time and reflection; and with them, the General Party of Reformers, who adhered to their measures, must receive the same satisfactory verdict.

With respect to his own share of the Correspondence, the Editor may be permitted to say a few words. It has fallen to his lot, as well as to that of much better men, to experience the attacks of obloquy and misrepresentation. It is his wish, therefore, to defend himself by the means which are here employed for their defence. He is aware, that considered apart from the more valuable letters of his Correspondents,

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Ispondents, his own are too unimportant to deserve the attention of the Public. But, connected with them, they will form the proper and necessary accompaniment, which will serve at once to authenticate and explain their more important part of the Correspondence, and to establish the innocence of the Editor.

With this design, these additional Volumes of Letters will be offered to the Public; and that the acquittal of their Authors will be the result of their appearance, the Editor dares to form a confident expectation.

BURTON-HALL, *June 16th*, 1804.

PRELIMINARY

## PRELIMINARY PAPERS.

### Paper I.

*Resolutions of a General Meeting at the Crown and Anchor  
Tavern, in the Strand, London, April 23d, 1790.*

1. **R**ESOLVED, That, although all times are proper to reform the Constitution in that fundamental point, the Representation of the People in Parliament, in which it is acknowledged to be essentially impaired, this is peculiarly a proper time.
2. Resolved, That although Ministers and Parties have always had objects, which in their view have been more important, the People can have none greater, or of more present importance, than that of a Reform in the Representation in Parliament.
3. Resolved, That the indifference or disinclination of Parliament to this great object, is no ground of just surprise or discouragement to the People, especially as the Public has not continued to call the attention of Parliament to a point on which it will not be fixed, except by a persevering call from the community: since no substantial Reform can be expected to move from Parliament to the People, but from the People to Parliament.
4. Resolved, That whenever the People shall renew Associations in their several Counties, Cities, and Towns, and shall unite their efforts, perseveringly and with order, for the attainment of a Reform in the Representation, a plan sufficiently simple and comprehensive may assuredly be formed; and, when thus supported, cannot fail of success.
5. Resolved, That a Committee be now appointed, for the purpose of promoting such Associations, and of consulting, preparing, and bringing forward a plan respecting the Election and Duration of Parliaments, in such manner as shall be most adapted to give, to whatever plan of Reform shall be ultimately approved, the weight and the authority of the National Judgment.
6. Resolved, That any seven of the said Committee be a sufficient number for the dispatch of business.
7. Resolved, That the said Committee be a Committee of Enquiry and Correspondence.
8. Resolved, That the said Committee have power of appointing, from their own number, Sub-Committees, as they shall judge expedient.

9. Resolved, That it be recommended to the said Committee, to consider whether some convenient and effectual method for the registering of Votes; for the taking the Poll by Districts, and in a mode less liable to influence, corruption, or tumults; for admitting other descriptions of persons, not otherwise already possessed of it, to the exercise of the Right of Suffrage; and for so admitting them, as may correct the gross partiality of Representation—may not be satisfactorily proposed as principal parts of a plan for a Parliamentary Reform.

10. Resolved, That it be recommended to the Committee, to consider to what limits the duration of Parliaments may be most beneficially reduced; and to request the opinion of such other Associations as may be formed upon this and the other subjects proposed to their inquiry. And respecting the duration, this Meeting is persuaded the Committee will have in their view the ancient and frequently-confirmed usage of short Parliaments; and that they will not in their proposal admit a longer term than a just necessity shall appear to them to require.

11. Resolved, That the said Committee do report whatever shall occur to them on the subjects recommended to their investigation, to the next General Meeting.

12. Resolved, That the Committee do meet on Wednesday the 28th instant, at seven o'clock in the evening, at this house.

13. Resolved, That a General Meeting of the Friends to a Parliamentary Reform be held at this house on Wednesday the 19th of May, at seven o'clock in the evening, to deliberate on the most effectual mode of obtaining that great end.

14. Resolved, That the thanks of this Meeting be given to the Right Hon. Henry Flood, M. P. for his services to the Public in reviving their attention to the cause of Parliamentary Reform.

15. Resolved, That the thanks of this Meeting be given to Capel Loft, Esq; for the very active part he has taken this evening.

16. Resolved, That the thanks of this Meeting be given to the Chairman.

17. Resolved, That these Resolutions be printed in the Public Papers.

JOHN INGRAM LOCKHART,  
Chairman.

*Paper*

## Paper II.

*Resolutions of a General Meeting of the Friends to a Parliamentary Reform, held at the Crown and Anchor Tavern in the Strand, on Wednesday, the 19th of May, 1790:*

CAPEL LOFFT, Esq. in the Chair.

**R**ESOLVED unanimously, That a Restoration of the Right of adequate Representation to the People is the best consolation which can be given them for the heavy burden which they now bear, as well as those additional ones, which, probably, may be soon imposed upon them, and which a War must necessarily occasion.

Resolved unanimously, That the alarm betrayed in the House of Commons by the Enemies of Reform, on the late Proposition of the Right Honourable Henry Flood, demonstrates that the present moment is peculiarly auspicious to the attempt of the People of England for the recovery of their just Rights.

Resolved unanimously, That we are justified in considering objections to the present time as an improper season for attempting the remedy of that intolerable evil, the present state of Parliamentary Representation, as a mean attempt to conceal an interested opposition to the measure itself.

Resolved unanimously, That the same arguments by which it has been attempted to justify the present state of Parliamentary Representation, would equally serve to vindicate it, even if the County of Middlesex alone had been accustomed to elect all those, who would in that case, probably, be called the Representatives of the People, a state of the Representation which we suppose no man out of Parliament would be so ignorant as to approve, or (if approving for interested purposes) so profligate as to defend.

Resolved unanimously, That the apostacy of the most ostentatious advocates of Parliamentary Reform, instead of damping ought to stimulate the activity of the People of England, as they may from hence learn, that the attainment of this great object, by any other means but their own spirit and virtue, is totally hopeless.

Resolved unanimously, That the Friends of a Parliamentary Reform, confirmed in their resolution of those events that have passed since their last General Meeting, will strenuously proceed towards the attainment of their object.

Resolved, That an extraordinary General Meeting be called within eight days after the dissolution of Parliament, whenever it shall happen.

Resolved, That the Resolutions of this Meeting be printed in the Public Papers.

Resolved. That the thanks of this Meeting be given to the Chairman.—Adjourned.

CAPEL LOFFT,

Chairman.

## Paper III.

*Declaration proposed to the Constitutional Society by Jeremiah Bailey, Esq. and adopted by the Society on the 28th of May, 1791.*

THE Society for Constitutional Information, vigilant to prevent the dangerous Influence of Publications detrimental to Civil and Religious Liberty, think it may be useful to the Public to express their disapprobation of the indecent virulence with which Mr. Edmund Burke has, with deplorable inconsistency to his former professions, censured the illustrious Patriots of a neighbouring Kingdom, for delivering more than twenty-five millions of their Fellow Creatures from a state of abject oppression, and civil bondage.

We feel inexpressible satisfaction in congratulating our Country on the masterly Refutation of that audacious Libel on Human Nature, and again recommend to the attentive perusal of every Citizen, the excellent Vindication of the French Revolution, written by Mr. Thomas Paine.

Enraged at the applause conferred on that glorious event by liberal and disinterested men, Mr. Burke, deserting the principles of genuine Whiggism, has, with the zeal of an apostate, honoured this, and other Societies of a similar nature, with his sarcastic censures. But, defended by the shield of conscious Integrity, we dread not the darts of loquacious calumny and deliberate misrepresentation. This Society was founded, not by a Pensioner or Tool of Faction, but by a Gentleman, who still lives an honour to his country. His character procured him associates, whose names will be revered by Posterity. This Society united to disseminate important Political Information; and from the rancour of an opponent (professedly an enemy to the natural Rights of Men) we infer that we have not done it unsuccessfully. That we are not unfriendly to the real Constitution of this Country, a reference to our Publications will clearly demonstrate. It is our adversaries who support Innovations, and abstract metaphysical ideas of Government: We only contend with a zeal suitable to the importance of the subject, for the Revival of Forms approved by experience, and derived from principles the most simple and ancient. It was never in our contemplation to destroy any Branch of the Legislature; nor to extend a Reform beyond the manifest corruptions of that part of it which the People at large have an undoubted right to create. If this be sedition, we are at issue with our accuser. Let him prove that those who now act in the most important concerns as the organs of the People, are commissioned to assume that character by a number that can in any rational construction be supposed the voice of

It is proper to remark, that the first part of the Rights of Man is the only Publication of Mr. Paine's to which this recommendation of the Society could possibly have any reference; as the second part, and Mr. Paine's other writings printed in England, were published subsequently to the date of this Paper. J. B.

the Commons of Great Britain; or, that agents limited to exercise their authority for three years, and no more, might without infringement of their trust, extend it to seven; and we will confess our delinquency. But while we conceive these to be enormous deviations from a just Representation, and feel the unnecessary and oppressive impositions of a narrow Aristocracy, we will persevere in reminding our Country of its degraded situation. The understanding of every candid man must revolt to hear encomiums on the Constitution while these abuses are unredressed; and it is certain, that on the first occasion that calls into action the Public Spirit of an enlightened Empire, they will, if not rectified, provoke a most awful popular indignation. Sensible of this, and zealous to preserve all reasonable subordination, we ardently recommend to those who are most interested in its consequences, a virtuous and voluntary surrender of every unconstitutional authority that is now exercised under the absurd pretence of a prescriptive Right to act unjustly. We reflect with perfect satisfaction on no other mode of Redress, than what the established Forms of the Constitution may sanction. But if great examples of Public Spirit have any influence, and comparisons can stimulate wise men, we think we may discern that a period is approaching; when justice will be demanded in a tone too peremptory to be neglected, and which yet it will be mortifying to gratify. The pursuit, however, of this Society, is limited to the attainment of such a Representation of the People in Parliament as may reasonably authorize the Executive Magistrate to exact a strict obedience to the Law from every Citizen; and until this object be obtained, neither the menaces of the Engines of Despotism, nor the irrational Documents of a perverted Understanding, will prevent us from announcing to the People of Great Britain the injury they sustain, by being deprived of the Constitutional Exercise of their Elective Rights.

By Order of the Society,

D. ADAMS, Secretary.

*Paper IV.*

*Declaration proposed by the Rev. C. Wyvill at a Public Meeting, held at Hawes, in the North-Riding of Yorkshire, on the 24th of Dec. 1792, but not accepted by the Meeting.*

**W**E the under written Freeholders, Inhabitants of Hawes, and other places within the District of Hang-West aforesaid, understanding that a spirit of disaffection to our happy Constitution, combined with principles destructive to property and all good order in Society have been manifested by divers deluded individuals in this Country, do therefore declare our steady attachment to the principles of our Constitution, by which the Government of this Nation is vested in the King, Lords, and Commons;

and

and

and our firm resolution to resist; by our united exertions in every warrantable way, any attack which may be made upon property in this neighbourhood; and to defend the Constitution, and support the laws of the Country against every attempt of insatuated individuals to overturn them by violence, under any pretence of effecting a redress of grievances, or changing our excellent Form of Government by King, Lords and Commons. But at the same time we think it our bounden duty to the Public, ourselves, and our posterity, to declare, that in our judgment divers great abuses respecting the Representation of the People in Parliament do exist, and ought to be removed; and also that a heavy load of taxes does still bear hard upon the People, more especially on persons of poor circumstances in this Kingdom: and we humbly hope that the wisdom and justice of Parliament will proceed as fast as the unavoidable exigencies of the State will permit, to diminish that heavy burthen of Taxes, and in the course of this Session, (if it be possible) will also correct moderately, but effectually those dangerous abuses of Parliamentary Representation; and we the more readily express these hopes, because we are well convinced that such timely concessions of prudence and justice would produce happy effects in this Country, and re-establish general harmony and content.

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*Paper V.*

*Petition from the Inhabitants of Middleham, &c. presented to Parliament in 1792.*

*To the Honourable the Commons of Great Britain, in Parliament assembled:*

**WE**, Inhabitants of the Market-Towns of Middleham, Leyburn, Hawes, and Airedale, in the North-Riding of the County of York; and Freeholders of the Districts in their respective neighbourhoods, understanding that an application will soon be made again to your Honourable House for the suppression of the Slave Trade, desire to express our hearty approbation of so benevolent a design. And we are persuaded, that in reprobating with just indignation a traffic carried on in violation of every principle of humanity and justice, as well as of the precepts of the Christian religion, we act in conformity with our duty, as men who claim the liberty we enjoy, not as a casual and precarious advantage which we owe to the bounty of men, but as a blessing to which we and our African brethren have an equal and an indefeasible right, as a gift which Providence intends for all mankind.

If the Constitution under which we live has carefully provided for the happiness, by securing the Freedom of the meanest Subject, which in many respects we acknowledge with heart-felt satisfaction, we trust that the Legislature will cease to support a trade replete with misery and oppression; that it will readily extend its protection

protection to the most injured of our fellow-creatures, and abolish a commerce supported only by violence and rapine, and which, by encouraging treachery, by exciting war, and forcing into slavery multitudes of the inhabitants of Africa, desolates a most extensive and fertile country.

Thus shall this outrage against humanity be no longer the disgrace of our national character, and the reproach of our Christian Profession; thus shall Peace be restored to that afflicted Land, and a friendly commercial intercourse enable us to introduce into it the comforts of social life, and the advantages of True Religion. And your Petitioners \* shall ever pray.

\* Drawn by the Rev. C. Wyvill, and from him accepted by the Petitioners.

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### Paper VI.

#### *Declaration of Loyalty by the Inhabitants of Sheffield.*

SHEFFIELD, 31<sup>st</sup> Dec. 1792.

**A**T a very numerous and respectable Meeting of the Inhabitants of the town and neighbourhood of Sheffield, held this day at the Cutlers' Hall, in pursuance of public advertisements, to consider of the mode of declaring their firm and inviolable attachment to the excellent Form of Government by King, Lords, and Commons, under which they have the peculiar happiness to live,

The Rev. JAMES WILKINSON in the Chair,

*The following Declaration and Resolutions were unanimously agreed to:*

**WE**, the undersigned, Inhabitants of the town and neighbourhood of Sheffield, in the County of York, think it a duty incumbent upon us at this time of national alarm, publicly to declare that we entertain a confident hope of the continuance of the tranquillity and peaceable disposition now prevalent in this town; and we are resolved on our parts to use our utmost endeavours to maintain the same by the constant tenor of our own conduct and example; and we will give the most strenuous and effectual assistance in our power to the Civil Government and Magistracy in opposing, repelling, and suppressing all riots and violent tumultuous outrages and disturbances in breach of the public peace.

And we hereby freely and sincerely profess and declare our most faithful, loyal, and inviolable attachment to his Majesty's person and Government, and our determined resolution, with our most zealous and vigilant exertions to defend, support, and preserve the most excellent Constitution of this Kingdom, settled and established on the principles asserted and confirmed at the glorious and happy Revolution in 1688, adapted by the Act of Settlement and

subsequent

subsequent improvements to the exigencies of succeeding times, and calculated for progressive advances towards perfection under the superintending care of the Legislature, in whose wisdom we confide for taking such measures, and enacting and providing such laws as are requisite for the present state of the Kingdom, correspondent to the reasonable desires, and the real sense of the nation at large, and adequate to the security of the persons and property, the liberty and happiness of the People, and the stability of the Throne of the Prince.

Resolved, That the above Declaration and Resolutions now adopted, as conveying the unanimous sense of this Meeting, be fairly written on parchment, and be left at the Cutlers' Hall every day till the 15th of January next, from eleven to two o'clock, to receive the signatures of all persons who shall approve the same.

Resolved, That copies thereof be published in the Sheffield News-Papers, and such of the London and Provincial Papers as the Chairman shall think proper; and that 3000 copies be printed for the purposes of general distribution.

JAMES WILKINSON,  
Chairman.

The Chairman having left the Chair,

Resolved unanimously, That the thanks of this Meeting be given to the Chairman for his able, manly, and impartial conduct on this occasion.

JOHN BROOKFIELD,  
Secretary.

#### Paper VII.

*Declaration of Loyalty, &c. prepared, but not proposed by Samuel Shore, Esq; in the Meeting at Sheffield, on the 31st of December, 1792.*

WE, the do, at this moment of apprehension and alarm, declare that we are sincerely attached to the Constitutional Government of our Country, and are fully sensible of the many blessings and unexampled prosperity which it has long dispensed to the Inhabitants of these Realms. We do further declare our determination firmly to support, to the utmost of our power, the English Constitution under the Form of King, Lords, and Commons, by the spirit and principles of which the Glorious Revolution in 1688 was effected, and the present Royal Family called to the Throne of these Kingdoms for the protection of Freedom; and we trust that this illustrious House will continue to be the supporters of Liberty, as one branch of the Legislature, and as the Head of the executive power of the Country, to the latest period of time.

It is with particular satisfaction we contemplate that principle of our Constitution, by the activity of which many valuable improvements

provements have been obtained without public convulsion; and we cannot but express our ardent wishes, that this Constitutional renovating principle may be again peaceably exercised for the speedy accomplishment of an effectual Reform in the Representation of the People, from which salutary measures, every branch of the Constitution would derive additional security; whatever heats and discontents now pervade the public mind, would be conciliated and extinguished, and the just liberties and privileges of the People be strengthened and extended. On this occasion we cannot omit to mention that great Bulwark of the Liberties of Britons, the Freedom of the Press, which having been confirmed by a late statute, we are resolved to maintain in its full and just extent against all invasion, under any pretext whatever, though at the same time we greatly lament, and warmly reprobate every unwarrantable abuse of this invaluable blessing to a free People.

In the Legislature and Government of our Country we confide for the continuance of those advantages which our insular situation affords, and therefore, entertain the pleasing expectation that we shall not be deprived of the enjoyments of Peace, nor of the flourishing state of our Commerce, by entering into a War with any foreign Power, unless compelled to it by the clearest principles of justice, and by inevitable necessity.

Having thus expressed our real attachments and unbiassed sentiments, we conclude by declaring with honest zeal, our utter abhorrence of all riots and tumults, of every injury to the persons or property of any of our fellow Citizens, and that we are determined to unite cordially with each other to prevent and resist breaches of the Peace, as well as in giving the most alert and decided assistance to the Civil Magistrate in the legal execution of his office.

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### *Paper VIII.*

#### *Address and Resolutions agreed to by the Friends of the People.*

FREEMASONS' TAVERN. *Wednesday, 9th April, 1794.*

*At an Extraordinary General Meeting of the Society of the Friends of the People, associated for the Purpose of obtaining a Parliamentary Reform, held this Day, the following Address and Resolutions were unanimously agreed to:*

“THE Society of the Friends of the People, associated for the purpose of obtaining a Reform in Parliament, appeal to the Public on behalf of their Principles, their Motives, and their Conduct.

“Of their Principles a solemn avowal was strictly made at the first institution of the Society, and the preservation of the Constitution declared to be the foundation of all their proceedings.

“Of

" Of their Motives, an equally public declaration was given, namely, That they were anxious by a timely and wholesome Reform to avert from their Country the calamities inseparable from such convulsions as arise when abuses are suffered to gather and accumulate, till the discontent of the People is converted into despair.

" Acting upon such principles, and guided by such views, the Society request the public attention to the line of conduct pursued by them.

" They first drew up a Report upon the State of the Representation, and therein detailed at large the nature and effects of the principal abuses, the sources from which they flowed, and the dangerous system of private patronage in the Elections of Members to serve in Parliament, to which they gave birth.

" The next act of the Society was to compress the substance of this Report into a Petition to the House of Commons; and in this they not only recapitulated the detail of abuses, but that the Enemies to Parliamentary Reform might not have a subterfuge to resort to, they tendered evidence of the truth of every fact they asserted. Had not the fact been recorded on the Journals of Parliament, the Society could scarce have hoped to obtain credit when they announced, that, after two days deliberation, the House refused to appoint a Committee to take the Petition into consideration.

" If the House of Commons are in truth that Representative Body, which the Constitution designs by " The Commons of Great Britain in Parliament assembled," the Petitioners have presented, and the Society have published the most daring Libel that ever was penned: Why were they not prosecuted? If the Petitioners only spoke wholesome Truths, and detected scandalous Violations of the acknowledged Privileges of the People, why were they not heard?

" Let what will have been the motives of the House of Commons for the conduct they pursued, there is, however, unfortunately no reason to presume that they have, as yet, ceased to operate, and consequently the Society have no inducement again to apply to Parliament. To question the consistency and sincerity of the House, would, perhaps, on any occasion be indecorous; but, on the subject of Parliamentary Reform, it would be even absurd. The situation of the Honourable Members being the same, it is not reasonably to be presumed that their sense of the advantages annexed to it will have changed; and their votes are much too intimately blended with their interests, to admit a doubt that they are sincere.

" Under these circumstances, the Society determine for the present not to renew their Petition; but, tho' they will not address the House of Commons, they earnestly appeal to the good sense, the integrity, and the independent spirit of the People of England.—To them the Society cheerfully submit their past conduct, and from the construction which any Friend to the Constitution can put upon it, confidently look for their future character. They trust they have in no instance been betrayed into intemperate warmth; and they are sure no menaces will awe them into dishonourable

nourable submission. Whatever they have seen, or heard, or read, since the first period of their institution, has more and more convinced them, that a speedy Reform in the Representation is necessary, and strengthened them in their resolution to persevere and to proceed. They are confident that the time is not far distant, when men will be compelled to feel that Liberty and Property are best secured under the guardianship of independence; and that a corrupt system, under whatever disguise it may be concealed, or by whatever abilities it may be supported, will be found to have consulted only the gratification and advancement of interested individuals at the expence of the public good.

" Whether the present time be improper for the discussion of the general question of Parliamentary Reform, the Society will not here enquire. For the sake of the argument let that be granted. But surely at a moment when the excellence of the Constitution is so vigorously maintained, that to propose amendment is looked upon as seditious, its advocates will at least be as strenuous in defence of what they acknowledge to be its established principles, as they are active in sounding the alarm against whatever they choose to call an innovation. If that spirit of discontent really prevails, which high authority so very confidently announces, all good men will be anxious to remove every plausible ground of complaint; and, above all, the House of Commons will be cautious how they tolerate a violation of the Constitution, which they have themselves specifically defined and reprobated; and to which, by their votes, they have called the public attention.

" From the year 1701 to the year 1794, the House of Commons have, at the commencement of every Session, uniformly passed the following resolution: " That it is a high infringement upon the liberties and privileges of the Commons of Great Britain, for any Lord of Parliament, or any Lord Lieutenant of any County, to concern themselves in the Elections of Members to serve for the Commons in Parliament."

" In their Petition of last year, the Society complained of the frequent violation of this excellent resolution, and brought the question before the House of Commons in these words: " Your Petitioners inform your Honourable House, and are ready to prove it at your bar, that they have the most reasonable grounds to suspect that no less than one hundred and fifty of your Honourable Members owe their Elections entirely to the interference of Peers; and that your Petitioners are prepared to shew by legal evidence, that forty Peers, in defiance of your resolutions, have possessed themselves of so many Burgage Tenures, and obtained such an absolute and uncontrolled command in very many small Boroughs in the Kingdom, as to be enabled by their own positive authority to return eighty one of your Honourable Members."

" The Society again repeat this in the face of the Country, and they earnestly entreat every Friend to the Liberties of England to take into their consideration the consequences of so alarming a practice.

" As

" As far as depends on them, the Society without hesitation lead the way to bring the question to issue, and, therefore,

Resolve unanimously :

1. " That the people have a right to the pure, genuine, and uncorrupted energy of the English Constitution, faithfully administered according to its acknowledged principles.

2. " That the Commons of Great Britain, in Parliament assembled, have, since the Reign of King William III. uniformly, solemnly, and annually determined one of those principles to be violated whenever a Peer interferes in an Election.

3. " That Peers at this day do interfere in Elections, not only by the exercise of the influence naturally arising from high rank and extensive possessions, but by imbraking large portions of their wealth in the purchase of Borough Property, notoriously for the purpose of sending Members into the House of Commons.

4. " That above one fourth of the present House of Commons owe their Seats to the known influence and interference of Peers.

5. " That this interference has a tendency to destroy those advantages which are to be derived from preserving the separate Branches of the Legislature distinct and independent of each other, and to make the House of Commons an engine of the Crown and Nobility, instead of what it ought to be—a check upon the King and the Lords.

6. " That the great number of Gentlemen well known to be concerned in Borough Speculations, who, by the advice of the Minister, have been created Peers, demands the most serious consideration of every Friend to the Constitution of Great Britain.

7. " That the People of this Country ought not to be taxed but by the consent of the Representatives chosen by the free suffrages of the Commons of Great Britain; and that a daring insult is offered to the Constitution of these Realms whenever a Peer attempts to usurp the Nomination of a Member to serve in Parliament.

In name, and by order of the Society,

(Signed) WM. BRETON,  
Chairman.

Paper

## Paper IX.

*Address of the Friends of the People.*

FREEMASONS' TAVERN, Saturday, May 31, 1794.

*At a General Meeting of the Society of the Friends of the People, associated for the Purpose of obtaining a Parliamentary Reform, held this Day,*

CHARLES STURT, Esq; M. P. in the Chair.

*The following Address to the People of Great Britain was agreed to, and ordered to be published;*

AS the season approaches when the Meetings of this Society are annually discontinued till the winter, we think it our duty, in the present extraordinary conjuncture, to vindicate our past conduct, and to declare the principles upon which we mean to proceed.

When we originally formed our Association, and distinguished ourselves by the title of "The Friends of the People," we did not mean, (as has been often basely insinuated) to divide the interests of our Countrymen, and to sow the seeds of jealousy and discord between the higher and the lower orders of Society. Devoted, on the contrary, to the principles, and therefore careful of the forms of our invaluable Constitution, (for which we appeal to our original Declaration and to all our subsequent Publications) we fought to support every order of the State in equal purity and vigour; and to ensure the universal freedom and happiness of the Nation by preserving those gradations of society which, in some mode or other, are inseparable from civil life. Previous to the time of our Association, we thought we had observed, among considerable numbers of the People, a disposition to condemn, and an earnest desire to correct those acknowledged abuses in the actual Administration of our Government, which have arisen from the increasing influence of the Crown, and the unequal Representation of the Commons in Parliament. To these causes we imputed the establishment of a system, which has loaded us with an enormous debt, which has produced the necessity of a corresponding revenue, and given birth to a code of summary laws, inconvenient to the enjoyment of private life, and dangerous in their progressive extension to the Liberty of the Country—A system to which we owe the fatal attempt to subjugate North-America, and the Revolution which finally separated her from Great Britain, an event which we cannot but consider as the real source and origin of the calamities of the present time. We considered that that Revolution had produced, and was producing the most extraordinary changes in the world, and had afforded to mankind a striking confirmation of this great and invariable truth, that the affection and submission of a Peop-

to their Government, arising from a sense and experience of the blessings of liberty and order, are the only real securities of any political institution.

We had seen the sudden overthrow of the ancient and powerful Monarchy of France by the force of opinion, when the People, irritated by a long course of suffering, were, by the refusal of timely redress, driven, at last, to extremity and despair: We had seen, and were in the daily course of seeing with affliction, the dreadful consequences of a sudden Revolution, upon whatever principles, or from whatever causes. We sought, therefore, (mistakenly perhaps, but honestly and conscientiously) to avert from our country, by such means as appeared to be safe and effectual, the calamities inseparable from such convulsions. At a moment, when a spirit of Liberty was seeking by untried ways to invent Constitutions, we invited our countrymen to look back to their own; to restore and to cherish it; conceiving it to be highly improbable, that the contagion of Revolution could reach this Island, as long as the true principles and securities of our own genuine Government, in spirit and in substance, as well as in its forms, should be preserved to the People. We impute the greater number of the publications, which, (*so long unnoticed by Government*) have at length been prosecuted as libels upon authority, and the Meetings of every denomination, which have been held up as dangerous to its sanctions, to one cause. We believe that their authors and supporters, in general, are not unfriendly to the British Constitution, but discontented at what they feel to be a manifest departure from its principles; and we attribute much of that spirit, by which his Majesty's Ministers profess to have been alarmed, to their own conduct in resorting to harsh and coercive measures, instead of shewing a disposition to attend to just complaints and to correct real abuse.

Without vindicating this spirit in its excesses, or having promoted it by our example, we see no cure for it but by endeavouring to remove its causes. We think, that to change opinion by coercive laws, or to prevent it from shewing itself, in the end, in corresponding conduct, is impossible; and we are therefore convinced, that while Parliament continues unreformed, and determined, at all hazards, to resist every Petition for Reformation, an alienation of affection from Parliament itself, and from the Magistracies of the Country, will spread and increase among the People; and that, though the English Government may continue by a severe exertion of its authority to support its establishment, it can neither render to the People the mild protection which is due to them, nor receive the happy return of their confidence and affection. On the other hand, we believe that a substantial Reform in the Representation of the People, which, without disturbing the forms of legislation, might secure the peaceful removal of abuses, would, at this calamitous moment, diffuse a spirit of affection and zeal throughout the country for its Government; administer in the practical enjoyment of its various advantages, the most powerful antidote to innovation, and exhibit a striking  
contract

contrast to the anarchy which prevails in France. This was the object of our Association. We wished, and we still wish to see the People of England assembled by affection and concord round the standard of their own Constitution, instead of being seduced by artifice, or impelled by terror, to become at once the blind instruments and the victims of those whose interest it may be to promote internal dissension, and to render Liberty itself unpopular to Englishmen, by railing at the crimes or errors of a mighty nation, over which they have no jurisdiction, and whose dangerous enmity they wantonly and foolishly provoke, at the risk of the very being of our Country.

Such were the reflections which originally produced, and which determine us to continue our Association. And, in distinguishing ourselves by the title of "The Friends of the People," we meant, and still mean, the People in its simplest, happiest, and most harmonious sense, considering a Nation in all its various classes, distinguished in their order, but united and inseparable in their mutual interests and relations, as constituting A PEOPLE.

Unfortunately, as we think, for this Country, (for we despise the calumny we have *personally* suffered) this Association found no credit with his Majesty's Ministers, nor of course with the numbers whom they can influence, either for these intentions, or the consequences we looked to from our Institution. A system, indeed, the reverse of ours, has been pursued—a system, on which, as far as it has been recognized by Law, we make no other remarks than such as we have the authority of Government itself for making, viz. That danger to authority has not been lessened;—that confidence in, and affection for Magistrates have not been re-established, but that, on the contrary, (according at least to those in Power) practices of the most dangerous tendency have lately been pursued with "increased activity and boldness;" and that the Country, instead of contentedly rejoicing in the blessings of our happy Constitution, cannot be kept any longer in subjection by the ordinary course of the Laws; but, that in the midst of a calamitous and hopeless war, waged, as it is said, to preserve the forms of that Government which we love, from violence and destruction, the Legislature has been obliged to dissolve, or suspend for a long season, the most essential parts of its substance and security.

We are sensible, that, as a voluntary society of private men, we possess no means of serving our Country, but in proportion to the confidence which our Countrymen may think due to us. It is not, therefore, from ostentation, nor even in justice to calumniated integrity, but to give effect to the Public Cause, that we thus review our past conduct in the presence of the Public, and pledge ourselves for the future; happy in the reflection, that tho' attacked and calumniated on the one hand by the enemies to Reform, supported by the authority and influence of Government, and wounded occasionally on the other by the jealousy of those who may have considered our reserve and moderation as a proof

of our unworthiness to be entrusted with the management of the Public Cause.

of weakness or insincerity, we have yet held one even, firm, uniform, and unabating course; a course in which we are resolved to persevere, as long as perseverance shall offer us any prospect of success.

**Paper X.**

**RESOLUTIONS**

*Offered by the Rev. C. Wyvill, through Philip Francis, Esq; to the Consideration of the Society, "The Friends of the People," as probable Means of Union between the Society and Persons throughout the Kingdom, who wish to promote, on moderate principles, a substantial Reformation of Parliament.*

**RESOLVED,** That it appears desirable to this Society,

1. **T**HAT a competent number of the little venal and enslaved Boroughs in England, not less than the number proposed by Mr. Pitt in the year 1785, should be disfranchised, by purchasing, under the authority of Parliament, a voluntary surrender of the Right of Representation.
2. That the sum wanted for completing the said purchase should be raised, not by any tax or public contribution, but by the sale of an adequate portion of those Crown Lands, in different parts of the kingdom, which may be deemed by Parliament not to contribute in the smallest degree to the accommodation or personal satisfaction of any part of the Royal Family.
3. That the Right of Representation thus obtained, should be transferred to certain parts of the Metropolis, and certain Counties of England and Wales, which at present are inadequately represented, or not represented at all, in due proportion to their respective population.
4. That the towns of Sheffield, Birmingham, Manchester, and Leeds, should be represented, each by two Members.
5. That the six Counties in Scotland, at present subject to alternate non-representation, should be freed from that disgraceful exception, by the addition of three Members; and that the Cities of Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Aberdeen, should be represented, each by two Members.
6. That in addition to the various descriptions of persons in Great Britain, at present entitled to vote in Parliamentary Elections, *Copyholders of Forty Shillings yearly, and Householders who have paid Taxes,* should be allowed to vote.
7. That in all contested Parliamentary Elections, the poll should be taken in one or more places in each parish, within the place or district for which the Election may be held; and in all General Elections, on the same day throughout Great Britain; and also, that regulations should be established, by which Bribery, Expence, and Disorder would be more effectually prevented.
8. That

8. That wages should be paid to Members of Parliament, not as in ancient times, by the County, City, or Town by which they have been elected, but out of the revenue of the Public; for the general interest of which the Constitution intends them to serve.

9. That *when means have been thus provided for restraining undue Influence, Expence and Tumult at Elections*, the Septennial Bill should be repealed, and the Duration of Parliaments should be reduced, as heretofore, to a term not exceeding one year.

Resolved, That this Society, approving each of these regulations separately, would highly approve the joint establishment of them all by Act of Parliament; and would accept the same with the most unfeigned gratitude, as a just, moderate, and effectual Reformation of Parliament.

C. WYVILL.

LONDON, Nov. 29, 1794.

\* The passages which are printed in *Italics* are corrections of the original plan, which were communicated to Philip Francis, Esq; by the Editor, in the 9th Letter of Number 7, dated Dec. 20, 1794.

*Paper XI.*

*Additional Article, proposed to be inserted immediately after the 9th Article, in the first of the preceding printed Resolutions.*

10. **T**HAT when the regulations stated in the nine preceding articles shall have been carried into effect, means be provided pursuant to the suggestion of Mr. Pitt in 1785, for purchasing the voluntary surrender of the Right of Representation from such of the remaining Boroughs as by depopulation or otherwise may be hereafter found not to contain 400 inhabited houses, and for transferring their surrendered Right of Representation to such Places or Districts as may be intitled from their superior population to receive an augmentation of Members, in order that thus our system of Representation may be secured from any fresh accumulation of abuses, and by gradual melioration in succeeding ages, may ultimately attain its highest point of perfection.

\* Transmitted to Philip Francis, Esq; on the 28th of February, 1795, and communicated by him to the Society, the Friends of the People, together with the preceding Resolutions, dated Nov. 29, 1794.

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DECLARATION

DECLARATION

*Of the Principles and Plan of Parliamentary Reform, recommended by the Society of the Friends of the People.*

FREEMASONS' TAVERN, 30th May, 1795.

*At a General Meeting of the Society of the Friends of the People, associated for the Purpose of obtaining a Parliamentary Reform, held this Day,*

WILLIAM SMITH, Esq; M. P. in the Chair.

THE Society having duly considered the Principles and Plan of Parliamentary Reform contained in the following declaration :

Resolved, That they do approve thereof, and recommend it to the consideration of the Public.

At the period when we resolved to suspend our proceedings, we saw this Country not only involved in the calamities inseparable from a ruinous unsuccessful war, but exposed, as many of us thought, to a direct and imminent danger. In such circumstances, it was our duty to consider, whether the efforts of this Society, in support of the cause of Parliamentary Reform, which in more favourable times and circumstances had failed of success, were likely to be attended with better effect, or even to be received with approbation; whether, in fact, we might not be instrumental in exciting discontent and promoting divisions among the People, in the face of an Enemy, whose successes on the Continent at that juncture had rendered him more formidable than ever; and whether, in prudence, we ought to take any step, by which we might incur the suspicion, so easy to be converted into accusation, of taking advantage of the public danger to weaken the hands of Government, when the united strength of the kingdom might be wanted for its defence. To these considerations we yielded, as long as they appeared to carry any colour of reality, or to be capable of furnishing a pretence to discredit the character of this Society. In the immediate situation of the Country, or in the impression it makes on the minds of the People, we see nothing that ought to prevent us from resuming our proceedings, and finishing the task we have undertaken.

The abuse and grievance of the actual Representation of the Commons in Parliament have been fully and repeatedly stated to the Nation, and directly to the House of Commons. The facts are undisputed, the grievance is undervalued, and the abuse is defended. That we may not, however, leave any part of our duty unperformed, we shall now state, in one view, and in as narrow a compass as the subject will admit of, our object; our principles, and the remedial measures we recommend. Concerning the first, there will probably be no difference of opinion among any who think

think a Reform necessary. The second we shall endeavour briefly to explain and enforce. On the third, we solicit assistance, and are open to correction.

Our object is to obtain and secure to the Commons of Great Britain, a real Representation in Parliament, freely chosen by themselves, independent of the Nobility and of the Crown, and amenable at short intervals to the judgment of their Constituents. If it were possible to obtain and secure this object, by any means, in which the interests and powers, at present in possession of the Elections were likely to concur, and if it belonged to us to arbitrate between the right of the Commons at large, and the personal claims of purchase, possession, or prescription, we might be content to yield to measures of accommodation, and endeavour to compound, in the first instance, with the actual occupants of the common property, on reasonable terms of concession. But, since it is evidently impracticable at once to satisfy the interest and to remove the abuse, we shall not waste our thoughts in attempting to reconcile contradictions, but proceed to deliver the positive principles on which we act, and the plan we have in view, without considering any difficulties but those which belong to the operation in itself, and leave the compensations, which may be claimed by individuals, to be considered by the prudence, and measured by the equity of a future independent House of Commons.

First, then, we conceive it to be indisputable, that in every Society, in which industry is meant to be encouraged, and the acquisition of property permitted, that property is as well entitled to protection from the laws, and should be equally guarded by the institutions of the Government, as the liberty or life of the proprietor. We do not say that the objects are of equal importance, but that they are equally entitled to protection. The medium we take will be found to answer every rational claim of protection to persons, as well as of security to property. For all the practical uses of Representation, the poorest man in the Kingdom will find himself as effectually represented by our plan of Election, as if he voted in it himself. The true interests of the Poor are intimately connected with the true interests of the Wealthy, and inseparable from those of the ranks immediately above poverty. To some, we trust, the acquisition of the active vote will be a spur to industry, and a reward of conduct; nor can it be fairly said that any man is excluded, for whom a place is reserved, which he may occupy at any time on easy terms. Understood in this sense, and formed on these principles, the Representation in Parliament would be really and substantially universal.

Admitting the general right of voting at Elections to be common and personal, the exercise of it, on the principle we have stated, must be subject to a qualification; so moderate, however, that there may be no condition of life in which it may not be acquired, by labour, by industry, or by talents. If, in the end, it should furnish an Election, as we believe it would do, for the whole united Kingdom, by nearly a million and a half of

heads of families, enough would be done to guard the rights of property on one side, and to satisfy the rational claims of personal representation on the other; and if a constituent power, so formed, so extended, and so limited, be not sufficient to create a free and independent House of Commons, the case is desperate; the object can never be obtained.

Such is the medium by which we think that all the useful and effective purposes of a Reform in the construction in the House of Commons, would be sufficiently answered. More perfect schemes or accurate theories may be formed on paper; but the perfection of such schemes is generally found to fail in practice. They who hope to succeed in practical measures of general operation, must yield to circumstances which they cannot command, must apply their principles no further than they will go with safety, and be satisfied with general effects. That final issue between two contending interests, with which neither of them is thoroughly contented, is very likely to be the best for them both. At first sight it looks like bravery to run into extremes; but we are perfectly sure that to keep the middle path, and to be ready to encounter the violence of either side, or of both when they unite, as they very often do, is the surest proof of political courage, as well as of prudence and virtue. If no qualification be required of the Elector, for what reason, and on what consistent principle should it be demanded in the Candidate? If property be at all a sign of independence, or a pledge for conduct, there can be no distinction, except in the degree, between the trust reposed by the Constitution in him who chooses, and him who is chosen; they are both intrusted with a function and a duty, in the due performance of which the community have an interest, and a right to be secured. You cannot, without a contradiction, demand a qualification in one without requiring it in the other. By not demanding it from either, that is, by leaving it open to the unqualified Elector, to choose an unqualified Candidate, it is true the inconsistency would be saved; but then the possible consequence might be, that a majority of the House of Commons might consist of persons as ignorant, as incapable, and as venal as the lowest and most profligate part of the community. Is it a question to be debated among men, whose judgment has been formed by reflection, or improved by education, or corrected by experience, whether such a House of Commons would be competent to make laws for the community, or be fit to be trusted with the power of taxation?

It is undoubtedly desirable, for many reasons, that the collective body of qualified Electors should be as numerous as possible; but principally because a great number of Electors is of itself a better security against corruption than the severest laws against bribery, by making the individual vote of no venal value, and hardly worth solicitation. The security on the other side, against violence and faction, depends on the personal circumstances, character, and situation of the voters. To exclude the effect of influence and  
favour

favour on human actions is impossible ; but it may reasonably be expected that, when the Elector has something to give, and nothing to sell, his inclination and his judgment will go together, and determine him in favour of the worthiest Candidate. A House of Commons chosen on these principles, by the combined operation of property and population, will be free and independent, if any thing can make it so. To keep it free, and independent of any influence or interest, but that of their Constituents, the choice of new Representatives must frequently revert to the People.

This is the foundation of the plan we recommend. To carry it into effect, a considerable alteration must be made in the present distribution of the elective power. To reach the numbers, by whom the power ought to be exercised, it must be distributed equally and impartially over the whole surface of the Kingdom. To obtain that end, the most certain and the easiest course, undoubtedly, would be by a new division of the Country, for the single purpose of electing a fair and equal Representation, *and for no other*. We do not propose to change any thing, which can be left in its present shape and station, consistently with the accomplishment of the main purpose. To us it appears that a new division is indispensable, and that we should only cheat ourselves and deceive the Nation, if, for the sake of a useless accommodation, we yielded to any project or concession in which this condition were not included. What we want is a free House of Commons and a real Representation. Any measure of Reform, which does not really give and effectually secure that object, is more than unprofitable, and the efforts to obtain it worse than thrown away. For if any considerable move in this business should once be made without success, is it rational to expect that the Nation would ever be brought to make a second ? The whole measure, therefore, must not only be equal to the whole of its purpose, but it must move together, and act at once with all its force. Gradual alterations, or progressive improvements, which some men recommend, would all be successively absorbed, and sink into the standing system. Partial remedies serve only to soften the symptoms and to induce a habit of acquiescence, while they leave the root of the evil entire. If an effectual Reform of the House of Commons is not to be had *now*, let us take care not to make it unattainable hereafter by any act of agreement or composition with the mischief itself, or with the interests that support it. Much may be expected from the progress of events in their present course. In better times, the measure may be carried by consent ; in worse, by necessity.

On these principles we say,

1st. That every householder in Great Britain, *paying parish taxes*, except Peers, should have a vote in the Election of one Member of Parliament.

The species of property, which constitutes this qualification has the advantage of being open, ostensible, and incapable of being disputed. It indicates a real residence, and implies a stationary

interest in the place for which the vote is given, and the Representative chosen. But, besides the possession of a competent property, of which the occupation of a house paying taxes is a sufficient presumption, a householder has other qualities, which ought to recommend him to a favourable distinction, and particularly to the trust in question. He is necessarily the master, and probably the father of a family. In the first character, he has a personal credit and respect to maintain; in the second, he has given hostages to Society. He is the natural guardian and virtual Representative, not only of his family and servants, but of all those who depend upon him for support, protection, or employment. Such a station deserves confidence, and should be made respectable, that all men may be prompted and encouraged to rise to it. The relations and duties that belong to it, are antecedent to positive institutions, and constitute at once the basis and security of civil society.

If a more effectual or a more convenient scheme than ours could be contrived to put the persons, so qualified, in possession of their vote, we should be ready to accede to it. We consider the means only, as they may best insure the end. To us it appears, that supposing the whole number of parishes in England and Wales to be 9,913, and the whole number of houses paying taxes to be 1,231,200; this last number, divided by the number of persons to be chosen, ought to exhibit the number of house-keepers entitled to return one Member to Parliament, viz. 2,400; that then the whole number of parishes should also be distributed into 513 divisions, each division to consist of so many parishes as may together contain the number of houses required, or nearly so, without regard to fractions, and lie contiguous to one another, and, if possible, round the principal parish of the division, which should be the centre of the Election, and at which the returns from the other parishes should be received and made up, and the Election declared. By dividing the Country into single districts, the absurdity and inconvenience of choosing two persons, very often of opposite principles, to represent the same place, would be avoided. Such agents, instead of uniting to serve their principals, can only be employed in counteracting each other, if they act at all, and finally leave their Constituents without an effective voice in Parliament. Few of those, who now possess a vote, would be deprived of it by this plan. If it should appear, however, that the number of Freeholders and Copyholders, of the yearly value of forty shillings, who might not be householders, should be sufficient to deserve consideration, there could be no objection to the admission of persons so qualified, to vote in the parish, and for the division, where their property lay. The vital principle of the plan is to embrace the greatest possible number of Electors, consistently with a reasonable and moderate qualification.

2d. The Election of the whole Representation of the Kingdom should be made at the same hour, and on the same day.

3d. The

3d. The same principles and proceedings, which are proposed for England, to be followed in Scotland, and every solemnity observed in the conduct of the Elections, in both Kingdoms, which can tend to make it grave, serious, and respectable.

4th. That wages should be paid to Members serving in Parliament, and not holding offices under the Crown, not by the particular division for which they are elected, but out of the revenue of the Public, for the general interest of which the Constitution intends them to serve.

5th. Supposing all the preceding measures to be adopted, *and not otherwise*, we then are of opinion, that a General Election for the whole Kingdom might be conducted without tumult or expence, and completed in a few hours; that every fair and honest objection to shortening the Duration of Parliaments would be removed, and that in future the Elections might be triennial, biennial, or even annual, as they were in former times; Members of Parliament, who acted faithfully, would generally be re-chosen; but it is neither safe nor constitutional to leave any Representative very long out of the reach of his Constituents.

We do not enter now, because this is not the time for it, into the detail of subsidiary acts and provisions, which belong to the execution of the plan, and would be necessary to ensure the full effect of it. But we have sufficiently considered the subject in all parts to be able to affirm, not that, in the course of so great an operation, there are no difficulties to be encountered, or no inconveniences to be incurred, but that either they are not of a nature to be regarded in comparison with the object, or that they may be easily removed by skill and contrivance.

The only material doubt which this distribution of the elective power suggests, is whether, in favour of the less populous parts of the Kingdom, it might not be necessary or advisable to make a distinction between those parts and some of the great cities and populous towns; that is, whether, in the latter, the choice of each Member should not require a greater number of Electors than in the former. If this, after due consideration, should be thought a serious difficulty, we have no doubt that measures may be found to qualify or remove it. When once the individual vote is made to be of no saleable value whatever, as by the operation of this plan it must be, other difficulties will vanish or subside, because no other interest or value, attached to the vote, will be much insisted on, or regarded.

After long deliberation, we have fixed on a specific plan, and declared it without reserve. We ask the Friends of Reform in general, whether it be possible to create and secure a free and independent House of Commons by any measure less vigorous, or by any operation less extensive than that which we propose? There is no economy in stinting the expence, if the object is not to be accomplished without it; nor is the remedy complete that does not effectually guard against relapse.

Without a general concurrence of the Country, we know how vain it is to oppose the honest zeal of a few individuals to the active interests, powers, and combinations, by which every attempt to reinstate the People in the possession of their Constitution has been and will be resisted. We cannot serve the Nation without their active approbation. But events may come in aid of argument, and create an opportunity, for which we ought to be prepared. It is not possible that the period can be very remote, when the distresses heaped on the surviving industry and perishing resources of the Country; when the insatiable demands of Government, not only exhausting the returns, but invading the very sources of production; when the insupportable accumulation of debts and taxes, and the direct calamities of the war will have taught the people of Great Britain this salutary lesson, that, with a House of Commons reformed as it ought to be, such mischiefs might have been avoided, and may be prevented hereafter.

In name, and by order of the Society.

(Signed)

WILLIAM SMITH,  
Chairman.

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*Paper XIII.*

*Address to the King, and Petition to the House of Commons, agreed to by the County of Northumberland, on the 25th of November, 1795, with the Resolutions of the County annexed.*

Address to the KING's Most Excellent Majesty.

WE, your Majesty's most loyal and dutiful Subjects, approach your Throne with every sentiment of affection towards your Majesty, to express our detestation of the base attack lately made on your Majesty's sacred person. But, whilst we declare our abhorrence of that atrocious action, we think ourselves called upon to state our decided conviction of the sufficiency of the present laws for the security of your Majesty's Person and Government. Under this conviction, we have seen, with inexpressible alarm, that the outrage lately offered to your Majesty has been used as a pretence for introducing into Parliament two Bills, one of which is entitled "An Act for the Safety and Preservation of his Majesty's Person and Government against Treasonable and Seditious Practices and Attempts;" the other, "A Bill for the more effectually preventing Seditious Meetings and Assemblies."

These Bills we conceive to be unnecessary, the laws already in existence having since the Revolution been found sufficient in the most turbulent and critical times: but it is with sorrow that we are also compelled to add, that they are so framed; as, if passed into laws, effectually to destroy our ancient and undoubted Rights, and, by violating the fundamental parts of our invaluable Constitution,

tution; to render your Majesty's Throne less secure, its firmest support being the attachment of a Free and Loyal People.

Convinced, therefore, that these Bills are not calculated to effect the purposes their Authors profess to have in view, but whilst they will inevitably deprive us of those inestimable privileges which are our Birth-Right as Britons, and perhaps expose even your Majesty's sacred person to danger, (a possibility which we cannot look to without the most lively apprehensions) we humbly pray your Majesty to exercise the power vested in you by the Constitution, and to withhold your Royal Assent from these Bills, should they be presented to your Majesty for that purpose.

*To the Honourable the Commons of Great Britain, in Parliament assembled.*

**T**HE humble Petition of the Noblemen, Gentlemen, Clergy, Freeholders, and Inhabitants of the County of Northumberland,

Sheweth,

That your Petitioners have learnt, with inexpressible alarm, that a Bill hath been brought into your honourable House, entitled, "An Act for the more effectually preventing Seditious Meetings and Assemblies;" the provisions of which Bill are, in the humble apprehension of your Petitioners, destructive of the Constitution, and subversive of their ancient, true, and undoubted Rights and Liberties.

That the Laws of England are the birth-right of the People thereof; that the right of public discussion and petitioning for the Redress of Grievances is their inalienable privilege, confirmed to them by divers statutes of this realm.

That any attempt to restrain the People of England in the constitutional exercise of this their undoubted franchise, has a tendency to overthrow the fundamental laws of the kingdom, and to alienate the affections of the People from the established Government.

That your Petitioners, on the part of the People of England, solemnly disowning the charge of disloyalty which this Bill imputes to them, do humbly represent, that in their judgment the laws in being are sufficient, if duly executed, for the preservation of the public peace; and that, if they were not, it is inconsistent with the justice of this honourable House, that, for the transgressions of a few, the whole should be disfranchised.

Your Petitioners do therefore humbly pray this honourable House that the said Bill may not pass into a Law.

Your Petitioners beg leave further to represent to your honourable House, that the Bill now depending in your honourable House, entitled "An Act for the safety and preservation of his Majesty's Person and Government against treasonable and seditious practices

practices and attempts," hath created great disquietude and alarm in the minds of your Petitioners.

Your Petitioners conceive the said Bill to be unnecessary, the old Laws of this Realm having for centuries past been found fully adequate to all the exigencies of the State; and any occasional deviation from the same, by the introduction of "new-fangled Treasons," having proved no less dangerous to the Safety of the Sovereign, than fatal to the Liberties of the Subject.

That the vague and ambiguous terms in which the offences created by the said Bill are described, render the Lives and Liberties of the People of England precarious and insecure; so "that no man will know how he ought to behave himself, to do, speak, or say, for doubt of such pains of Treason."

Your Petitioners do therefore humbly pray this honourable House that the said Bill may not pass into a Law, and that it may be accorded that in no time to come any Treason be judged otherwise than was ordained by the statute of King Edward III.

And your Petitioners shall ever pray.

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*Resolutions of the County of Northumberland on the 25th of November, 1795.*

**R**ESOLVED, That the Bill of Rights is an essential component part of that original contract between King and People, recognized and confirmed at the æra of the Revolution.

That the freedom of public discussion and petitioning for Redress of Grievances is one of the ancient, true, and undoubted privileges of the People of England, ratified to them by the Bill of Rights.

That any attempt directly or indirectly to restrain or curtail the freedom of public discussion and petitioning for Redress of Grievances, is a violation of the Constitution, has a tendency to annul the Bill of Rights, and thereby to break the original contract between King and People.

That we are fully convinced that the laws now in being are equal to the protection of our beloved Sovereign, and that they are also sufficient to suppress or disperse any Meetings which are seditious and tumultuous, wherefore in proportion as we revere the Constitution, we are alarmed at two Bills now depending in Parliament, the tendency of which is to prevent a free and public discussion of public measures.

That in our estimation the odious principle of these Bills cannot be diminished by the operation of them being limited to a short duration of time. By admitting the introduction of them into the House of Commons, the Representatives of the People have implied a disloyalty and disaffection in their Constituents, which we indignantly disown, and have acted upon an opinion which we cannot adopt, and which the experience of more than  
a century

a century has falsified, viz. that the Safety of the Sovereign is incompatible with the Rights of the People.

That this Meeting do entirely approve the Parliamentary conduct of Charles Grey, Esq; the independent Representative of this County, and particularly his present strenuous opposition to the Bills now pending in Parliament.

That Charles Grey and Thomas Richard Beaumont, Esqrs; Representatives in Parliament for this County, be instructed to use their utmost exertions to prevent the aforesaid Bills from becoming a part of the Laws of these Realms.

That the thanks of this Meeting be given to those Members of both Houses of Parliament who have boldly and virtuously opposed these obnoxious and unconstitutional measures.

*Paper XIV.*

*Requisition to the High Sheriff of the County of York, with his Answer and an Advertisement annexed, dated Nov. 26, 1795.*

**YORKSHIRE COUNTY MEETING.**

**T**HE Requisition copied below, signed by fifty four of us whose names are subscribed, was delivered to the Under Sheriff at York, on Thursday Morning, the 19th instant, and to the High Sheriff at Lancaster, by a special Messenger; on Saturday last, to which he was pleased to send the answer copied below the Requisition, which answer was not received at York till near twelve o'clock on Monday night.

To the High-Sheriff of the County of York.

November, 1795.

Sir,

**W**E, whose names are hereunto subscribed do request you to call a Meeting of the Freeholders of the County of York at an early day, to take into consideration the propriety of presenting an humble and dutiful Address to his Majesty, expressive of their abhorrence of the late outrage upon his Royal Person; and at the same time to declare their sentiments upon the state of public affairs, and more especially upon some Bills now depending in Parliament, which, if passed into Laws, will, in our opinion, tend to subvert the genuine principles of our excellent Constitution.

*Th*

*The High Sheriff's Answer, addressed to Mess. Townsend and Wolley, York.*

LANCASTER, Saturday.

Sir,

I Have received your letters this morning, and must upon due and full consideration give my most strenuous opposition and negative to such a proceeding, as I do not see what end it can possibly answer. A Meeting of so large and unwieldy a Body of Men as the Freeholders of Yorkshire, who are divided by such a variety of opposite opinions and views, can only tend to raise riot and discontents. Should the Gentlemen who have signed their names to the Requisition think it necessary to meet of their own accord, I certainly can say nothing against it. But I certainly must decline having any hand in the transaction.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

MARK SYKES.

I am going to leave this Place immediately, but have not as yet fixed my plan.

Therefore, we whose names are hereunto subscribed, request the Freeholders of the County of York to meet at the Castle of York, if the High Sheriff will permit the same to be used for that purpose; and, if not, at the Guild-Hall of the City of York, on Tuesday the first day of December next, at eleven o'clock in the forenoon, for the purposes specified in the Requisition to the High Sheriff.

Thomas Gascoigne  
S. F. Barlow  
G. A. Chetwynd Stapylton  
John Raper  
William Carr  
Rob. Sinclair  
John Milnes  
C. Turner  
James Milnes  
John Lumb  
Richard Lumb  
Thomas Lumb  
William Lee  
Richard S. Milnes  
T. Copley  
Godfrey Wolley  
John Cooke  
William Wrightson  
Stephen Croft, jun.

C. Wyvill  
Samuel Shore  
Samuel Shore, jun.  
John Hotbain  
John Wharton  
Joseph Walker  
Thomas Smith  
Thomas Willson  
John Yorke  
Pemberton Milnes  
Bryan W. D. Cooke  
Wm. Milner  
W. N. W. Hewett  
James Farrar  
John Shore  
Thomas Rawson  
John Rawson  
John Booth

Henry

Henry Goodricke  
Christopher Wilton  
William Bosville  
Thomas Arthington  
John Dixon  
Sam. Hamer Oates  
Cha. G. Fairfax  
William Smithson  
John Plowes  
Richard Lee  
William Walker  
Henry Leirfe

John Yarker  
Luke Yarker  
Geo. Townend  
Edward Wolley  
Conyers Norton  
Jonathan Walker  
Joseph Bilton  
Richard Hobson  
John Payne  
Godfrey Higgins, jun.  
B. Graham  
Richard Acklom

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Paper XV.

*The Address of the Rev. Christopher Wyvill to the Worthy Freeholders of Yorkshire, dated November 27, 1795, with his Speeches at York on the 1st of December, 1795, &c. annexed, submitted by Mr. Wyvill to the Consideration of the Public.*

ADVERTISEMENT.

AT the Meeting at York, on the 1st of December, 1795, Mr. Wyvill observed, that his Address to the Worthy Freeholders of Yorkshire, dated November 27, was censured with much acrimony by some eager supporters of the measures of Administration. He heard their angry invectives with unconcern, ascribing them to the heat and violence of that moment. Soon after his return home, he found the attack upon his character and conduct continued with increasing rage and virulence; the Address represented as seditious and treasonable, himself threatened with prosecution, as a daring criminal, and even a traitor to his Country. In times like the present, such violence and such injustice ought not to appear surprising: Under the most atrocious calumnies, the innocent man may still preserve perfect composure of mind; but it may not be improper for him to guard against the possible effects of such injurious misrepresentations.

Upon this occasion, however, Mr. Wyvill cannot conceive that any argumentation to demonstrate the falsehood and futility of these charges is necessary. To those who have heard the accusation, or who have seen the reasoning by which his accusers attempt to support it, he offers no other vindication of his conduct than what may be found in the Address of the 27th of November, here re-published, and in the Speeches which are subjoined to it, and which contain the substance, as nearly as he can recollect it, of what he spoke at the Meeting of the 1st of December. He trusts, that to state what he actually wrote and said, will be sufficient to justify him in the judgment of his Countrymen. It was, and it remains his sincere opinion, that a speedy, equitable

equitable Peace with France and Holland, and a due execution of the laws against Sedition, without any infringement of our ancient rights of free discussion and free petition to the Legislature, would be the best and surest means to lessen discontents, and to guard his Majesty's Person and Government against every danger. In this opinion, worthy, public-spirited, and impartial men may not uniformly concur with him: They may continue their confidence in a Minister whom he distrusts; they may submit without a murmur to a violation of the Bill of Rights, against which he protests, as most dangerous and unwarrantable; they may acquiesce in silence under the protraction of a War, against which he remonstrates, as most unjust and ruinous to the Country; but he feels no apprehension that the Addresses and Speeches, when read with candour and attention, will be thought to furnish the slightest ground of suspicion, that the author is not truly, what he professes himself to be, a well-wisher to the happiness of his fellow-citizens, a Friend to Order, Peace, and the just Rights of Property, and a Lover of Rational Liberty, on the genuine principles of the Constitution.

C. WYVILL.

BURTON-HALL, Dec. 14, 1795.

N. B. The Petitions to the King and the House of Commons, proposed by Mr. Wyvill to the Meeting at York on the 1st of December, are not annexed to the other Papers; because in Yorkshire those Petitions have been generally read, and, it is said, almost as generally admitted to be liable to no material objection.

### THE ADDRESS.

*To the Worthy Freeholders of Yorkshire.*

**I**F it be merit to endure, with patience, the calamities of a disastrous War, as rashly undertaken as it has been unwisely conducted; or if it be virtue to submit with composure to the horrors of a famine, produced, in a great measure, by the waste and desolation of hostilities, in which the greatest part of Europe has been engaged, that merit and that virtue, my worthy friends, have been sufficiently yours.

The situation of your Country now demands that other virtues be exerted; the impending danger loudly warns you, that patience and submissive composure must now be changed to fortitude, public spirit, and an active, but well-tempered zeal for Peace, and the preservation of the Rights and Liberties of the English Nation.

You have seen the system of a State Inquisition, begun by the employment of spies and informers, in every corner of the Kingdom; you have witnessed the growth of that system, in its natural consequences,

consequences, the most violent State prosecutions, and the most rigorous and unprecedented punishments; and you now witness the system nearly arrived at its full maturity, in the Bills depending at this moment in Parliament. Already you are apprised, that if these Bills should pass into laws, your ancient and indubitable right to free discussion, and free petition to the Legislature for Redress of Grievances, will be for ever lost.

The case is too plain for argument—the danger too urgent for delay.

To prevent the declaration of your sense on these pernicious measures, the Ministers hurry these Bills through Parliament with unusual rapidity; and in a few days this great County must assemble, or the opportunity to protest against this violation of the fundamental Rights of the People of England will be passed away.

*Come forth then from your looms, ye honest and industrious Clothiers: quit the labours of your fields, for one day, ye stout and independent Yeomen: come forth in the spirit of your ancestors, and show you deserve to be free. Come forth, not to flatter Courts or compliment your Liberties away, nor yet to sanction tumult, or countenance the designs of Levellers and Republicans, but peaceably and legally while the laws permit you, with honest and prudent zeal, to express to the King the genuine truth from your hearts; to declare your abhorrence and detestation of the late base and unmanly outrage on his Majesty's person, and your firm attachment to the Constitution, on its genuine principles, and in all its branches; at the same to lay at the foot of the Throne your most humble intreaty, supplicating his Majesty that the fundamental laws of the land may remain unchanged; that the Bills in question, should they pass the two Houses of Parliament, may not receive the Royal Assent; and that his Majesty, considering the distress and danger of the Country, occasioned by the present calamitous War, may be graciously pleased to terminate that distress and danger by a speedy Peace.*

These are the measures, my worthy fellow-citizens, which the urgent danger of the Public calls for; they are measures calculated to restore the blessings of Peace; to maintain the Constitution on its true basis; to secure the rights of the Nation on their ancient foundation; and, by preventing the fatal extremes of Despotism and Anarchy, to secure at once just Government, and rational Liberty.

If, then, the measures alluded to, or any other measures of a similar tendency, should be proposed to your consideration by the movers of this Meeting, it is humbly hoped they will receive your support.

C. WYVILL.

York, Nov. 27, 1795.

*Mr. Wyvill's Speech on proposing the Petitions to the Meeting at the Guild-Hall, York, December 1, 1795.*

Mr. Chairman,

IT has frequently fallen to my lot to address the Freeholders of this County on the state of public affairs, and I never did address them without feeling much diffidence and anxiety; but I now feel greater embarrassment than I ever felt on any similar occasion, because I am convinced I never stood forward in so perilous a conjuncture, in times so big with difficulty and distress. The measures I mean to propose to this respectable assembly, I think right and necessary measures; and I trust they will be discussed without heat or animosity. The French Revolution is an event unprecedented in the annals of mankind; and many of its concomitant circumstances are in their colour and complexion dark and horrible. The state of every Country in Europe may probably be affected by it, in a greater or less degree. In this Country, it was at an early period the source of dispute and controversy: In the progress of these disputes, dissensions became more and more violent; till at last they involved us in a war with France, and filled this Country with discontent and alarm. At such a crisis, it behoves us to apply some lenient measure, some healing remedy to the fore and angry temper of the times.

We are all interested to obtain and preserve peace at home and abroad; we all venerate our gracious Sovereign; we all abhor the late outrage on his person, and hope the offender may be brought to condign punishment; we all wish to preserve the Constitution on its true basis. Such is the aim and intention of the measures I have to propose, which would be more effectual to promote order and tranquillity than any additional severities, or to any restraints of our ancient rights; by the two tremendous Bills now depending in Parliament. The clauses of these Bills would violate the Bill of Rights, the great barrier of our liberties; they would alter the fundamental law of the land: and I now stand forward, not as I formerly did, to propose improvements, but to repel the most dangerous innovations in the Constitution. These are the considerations which have influenced my present conduct; and I am firmly persuaded, that I am contributing, in a material degree, to the welfare of my Country, when I propose these Petitions to your acceptance:—I therefore desire Sir Thomas Gascoigne will have the goodness to read this Address and Petition to the King.

*Mr. Wyvill's Speech after the Petitions had been adopted by the Meeting.*

Mr. Chairman,

I Observe with peculiar satisfaction, that the Petitions have been adopted with unanimity by this respectable Meeting; but the conjuncture demands the utmost fortitude, as well as the greatest prudence;

prudence ; for no immediate success, I fear, is to be expected from the present effort : but should the dreaded change in our ancient laws take place, the people ought, and will endeavour to obtain redress ; their perseverance in firm, steady, constitutional Addresses to the Legislature, will be ultimately successful. If we address the Throne, we know the gracious and benign disposition of the Prince who sits upon it, and our application there will finally prevail. When he knows the sentiments of his people, he will comply with their wishes : We ask but that our ancient and indubitable rights may not be infringed ; that the Bill of Rights may remain inviolate ; that the barrier of our Liberties, which our ancestors erected, may not be broken down. The Bill of Rights is the mound which they set up to guard us from the invasions of power ; we cannot be too jealous to watch that mound, and prevent any, the smallest breach, which, if once made, will soon be widened by fraud, till at last the torrent of corruption will rush in, and the overwhelming power of the Crown will follow, and destroy the subject land. Arduous indeed, and dangerous in the extreme, is the situation of the Country. We appear to be placed on a narrow ridge of land, with a frightful precipice on either side : if we deviate to the right hand, we fall into the gulph of Despotism, thence never to escape ; if we swerve to the left hand, we tumble down among the rocks and breakers of anarchy and confusion, where certain ruin waits us. To avoid these perils, we must proceed with circumspection, and tread the direct and middle path of the Constitution. By pursuing that line with caution, but with the spirit of Freemen, we shall avoid the dangers on either side ; and I trust our efforts will ultimately prevail. I have the cause near to my heart, and will not desert the Liberties of my Country in the hour of danger and distress ; but I am no less the decided friend of order, peace, and tranquillity. Standing on this ground, I dread not calumny ; I am fearless of reproach. They much mistake me who conceive my conduct is influenced by motives of a different kind. I have some property to lose, and I feel a wish to preserve it. When I formerly addressed you, I was a husband, but not a parent ; I am now the father of a large family of children, whom I love ; they are my sureties to the public ; it cannot be thought I mean to expose them to ruin. But I should be sorry that any of my children should have reason hereafter to reproach me, that by my negligence in the hour of danger, I had contributed, in some degree, to the success of measures which had rendered them slaves. When the Gentlemen who proposed this Meeting, and who deserve on that account the thanks of their Country, first notified their intention to me, I thought it my duty to join them. I should not have forgiven myself if I had not. Such were the motives of my present conduct ; and I state them to obviate misrepresentation. I have long served the public with zeal and disinterested fidelity ; and, if it be necessary, I will come forward again and again to assert the Rights of the People, and to support the Constitution on its genuine principles.

**YORK COUNTY MEETING.**

*At a Meeting of the Freeholders of the County of York, held in pursuance of Advertisement, in the Guild-Hall of the City of York, on the first Day of December, 1795.*

(Sir THOMAS GASCOIGNE, Bart. in the Chair.)

**T**WO Bills, the one intitled "An Act for the Safety and Preservation of his Majesty's Person and Government against "treasonable and seditious practices and attempts," and the other, intitled "a Bill for the more effectually preventing Seditious Meetings and Assemblies," were read to the Meeting, after which the fifth Clause and some other passages from the Bill of Rights were also read.

Upon which the following Address and Petition to the Throne, and also the following Petition to the House of Commons having been read to the Meeting,

A motion was made by the Rev. Christopher Wyvill, and seconded by William Wrightson, Esq; That the said Address and Petition to the Throne do pass as the Act of this Assembly, which motion being put by Sir Thomas Gascoigne, was carried unanimously in the affirmative.

After which a motion was made by the Rev. Christopher Wyvill, and seconded by William Wrightson, Esq; That the said Petition to the House of Commons do pass as the act of this Assembly, which motion being put by Sir Thomas Gascoigne, was carried unanimously in the affirmative.

It was then moved, seconded, and carried unanimously. That the Address and Petition to the Throne; and the Petition to the House of Commons, be presented by Henry Duncombe, Esq; and Sir William Milner.

It was then moved, seconded, and carried unanimously, that the thanks of this Meeting be given to Sir Thomas Gascoigne, and the other worthy Subscribers to the Requisition at whose instance the Meeting was convened.

THOMAS GASCOIGNE, Chairman.

To the KING's Most Excellent Majesty.

*The Address and humble Petition of the undersigned Freeholders of the County of York.*

Most Gracious Sovereign,

**W**E, the undersigned Freeholders of the County of York, beg leave to approach the Throne, with our most cordial congratulations on your Majesty's deliverance from the late atrocious attacks on your Royal Person in your passage to and from Parliament:

ment: We cannot express in terms sufficiently strong, our detestation and abhorrence of those base and unmanly outrages; and we most earnestly wish and hope, that the perpetrators of those enormous crimes, on due conviction of their guilt, may speedily be brought to condign punishment; and we trust that the just severity of that punishment will effectually prevent the repetition of any such abominable outrage.

We are eager, Sir, on this occasion, to join the Great Body of our fellow subjects, in expressing to your Majesty the sentiments of loyal and dutiful hearts: we reflect with pleasure on the mildness and benignity of your Majesty's personal character; we recollect with satisfaction your voluntary proposition, at an early period of your Reign, for securing the independence of the Judges, and divers instances, at subsequent periods, of your gracious disposition to listen to the complaints of your People, and we acknowledge with gratitude the many blessings we have enjoyed in the general course of your Majesty's Government; we do therefore declare, that we are warmly attached to your Majesty's Person and Government, and firmly resolved, with our best faculties, and to the utmost extent of our power, to support the Constitution on its genuine principles, and in all its branches.

Having made this most sincere and solemn declaration, we feel it to be our duty in the present perilous conjuncture, not to retire from the Throne, without having first laid at the foot of it, with all possible deference and duty, the declaration of our most humble opinion, that the war in which we have been some years unfortunately engaged, has been a most expensive, bloody, and disastrous war; that the calamities and accumulated burthens which have been the consequence of this war, have also been the cause of a great part of those discontents which now distract this Country, and that the continuance of the war, instead of lessening those evils, too plainly tends to increase and inflame them, more especially when there is reason to fear that the scourge of scarcity may be soon added to that of war; considering the distressed and dangerous situation of the Country at present, and the much greater calamities to which a protraction of the war may expose your Majesty and the Nation, we deem it our duty, with great humility, but with equal earnestness, to intreat your Majesty to endeavour, by engaging in a negotiation with the existing Governments of France and Holland, speedily to restore to your faithful people the blessings of Peace. And should those Governments unexpectedly refuse to conclude a Peace on equitable terms, your Petitioners will courageously bear the evils of a continued war, then unavoidable, and support your Majesty in the prosecution of it with their most vigorous exertions, until reasonable terms of peace can be obtained.

*To the Honourable the Commons of Great-Britain in Parliament assembled.*

*The Petition of the undersigned Freeholders of Yorkshire,*

Sheweth, That, by the fifth Article of the Bill of Rights, the people of this land are entitled to the privileges of free discussion, and free petition to the Legislature. These Rights, like every other political Right, are liable to be abused; but if they have been abused by any rash and misguided individuals, we do conceive, that for the fault of a few desperate persons, the whole People of England ought not, and justly cannot forfeit these invaluable privileges; and such forfeiture would be more especially grievous when their general loyalty, their love of order and tranquillity, and their attachment to the Constitution, are certain and unquestionable. We have seen, therefore, with grief and astonishment, that two Bills, one of which is intitled "An Act for the safety and preservation of his Majesty's Person and Government against treasonable and seditious practices and attempts;" the other of which is intitled "A Bill for the more effectually preventing Seditious Meetings and Assemblies," have been offered to Parliament by his Majesty's Ministers in the present Session, by which we humbly conceive such restraints are proposed to be laid on the exercise of our rights of free discussion, and free petition to the Legislature, as would amount, if passed into laws, to a direct and fatal violation of the Bill of Rights. In the language of that memorable statute, our ancestors, at the era of the Revolution, did claim, demand, and insist on each of the enumerated articles as their ancient and indubitable right; and as such they were offered by the two Houses of Parliament to the acceptance of his Majesty, King William, and by him they were accepted, as the conditions on which the Royal State and Dignity were transferred to him.

On the same implied conditions, we have ever understood the Royal State and Dignity to have been subsequently settled on his present Majesty's illustrious family; and as the rights confirmed in this statute have been justly deemed the most sacred Rights of the Nation, and have hitherto suffered under the authority of Parliament no violation; however small in its degree, however short in its duration, we trust the first example of any Legislative infringement of these our ancient and indubitable Rights will not occur during the Reign of our present Gracious Sovereign.

We therefore do most humbly petition this Honourable House, that the fundamental Laws of the Land may remain unchanged; and particularly we do most earnestly request; that the two Bills in question may not pass this Honourable House, and your Petitioners will ever pray, &c.

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At the commencement of the above Meeting, Sir Thomas Gascoigne, Bart. was called to the Chair. A cry was then raised for Bacon

Bacon Frank, Esq; to take the Chair, which, after much noise and tumult, he did; but instead of immediately proceeding upon the business for which the Meeting was convened, a motion was made for an adjournment to the Castle-Yard. This motion was resisted by most of the Gentlemen who had signed the Requisition to the High-Sheriff and their Friends, in as much as the use of the Castle-Yard had been before refused them by the Under-Sheriff: Whereupon, after much altercation, the Chairman declared the Meeting to be adjourned. Then he and his friends accordingly withdrew to the Castle, leaving those who had promoted the Meeting and their Supporters in possession of the Hall. Sir Thomas Gascoigne being then called to the Chair, the above Address and Petition were unanimously agreed to, and the Freeholders present subscribed their names to both, with the places of their several Freeholds annexed; and the same were forwarded that evening to London.

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*Paper XVIII.*

*Proceedings at the County Meeting at Durham.*

SIR John Eden having been requested to take the Chair, in a short, but pertinent speech, expressed his hope that the debate might be conducted with the utmost fairness and decency; and briefly detailed the rules usually observed, and the privileges allowed to the several Speakers in Meetings of this kind. He thought the two Bills very improper, and that if his Majesty's Ministers should advise him to stop the progress of these Bills, it would be the most popular thing possible. It had been said by a writer of eminence, that if ever the English should lose their Liberties, it would be thro' a popular Minister. "If we are to lose them," said Sir John, "I think these Bills will go a great way to effect it. Our opposition will probably be of little avail, but we shall at least have the satisfaction of having done our duty."

Mr. Hoar gave a History of Treasons, and observed that one law in particular, in the Reign of Henry VIII. was so like the present Bill, that it excited particular attention. It enacted, that "to derogate from the King's style and royal title is high-treason." However, these violent and rigorous measures were abrogated by a statute passed in the Reign of Mary, intirely abolishing new-fangled treasons, and reducing the law of treason to the standard of Edward III.—The preamble to this statute is very remarkable. "Forasmuch as the state of every King and Ruler standeth more assured by the love and favour of the subjects than by the dread of the laws," &c.—Thus the law of treason stands "at this day; and Gentlemen," said Mr. Hoar, "I hope we shall not be told that those laws are necessary for the preservation of

"the mild and merciful George, which were repealed by the  
 "bloody and bigotted Mary! I hope we shall not be told that  
 "she could repose on the love and favour of her subjects, and that  
 "our benevolent Monarch will not find equal assurance in the  
 "hearts and affections of his People!" And yet by the present Bill  
 it is enacted, that "If any person shall devise any thing tending  
 "to depose him from the style, honour, or kingly name of  
 "the Crown of these Realms," &c. By the other Bill, pur-  
 porting to be "an Act for preventing Seditious Meetings and  
 Assemblies," a Magistrate is made the sole judge of the sentiments  
 we may utter. Men are but men, and it is the nature of power that  
 its possessors should be desirous of extending it. If such power as  
 this were placed in the hands of the best of men, we have nothing  
 to secure us against the abuse of it but their discretion; and is that  
 a foundation on which the Rights and Liberties of Britons ought  
 to be placed? These Bills, therefore, destroy the dearest Rights  
 of our Country; Rights for which our fathers bled, and which  
 have hitherto been deemed as inalienable and sacred as the prerogatives  
 of the Crown. The compact between the People and the  
 Crown is mutual: the laws are the birth-right of the People,  
 and none can destroy either the one or the other, without destroying  
 the whole, and annihilating the Constitution.

The Rev. Mr. Nesfield observed, that the person of the King is no  
 more secure from the hatred of the assassin than the life of the meanest  
 of his subjects. It is in the good opinion of the People, and  
 not in the multitude or severity of laws, that Kings are inviolate;  
 and it is much to be wished, that some true friend of our excellent  
 Sovereign, laying aside the courtly custom of whispering falsehoods  
 into the Royal ear, would explicitly state the fatal tendency of  
 these Bills, and induce him to stop them by a generous negative.  
 "By this, our Sovereign would not only become the most popular,  
 but also the most powerful Monarch that ever sat upon the Throne.  
 Is it not a shocking reflection upon a Freeman, that he cannot  
 hold a Meeting without being overhauled by a Justice? It is an  
 idea so injurious to the spirit of an Englishman, that it is astonish-  
 ing how Ministers dared have the impudence to bring it forward.  
 If the war be continued, you well know the scarcity we all feel,  
 of which I, as a Magistrate, have particular occasion to see the  
 distresses it causes. They will, in all human probability, be increased.  
 New taxes must be raised to pay the new accumulated debts; and  
 if you come forward to express your complaints, if you dare make  
 them, you will be answered either by the bayonet of the Dragoon,  
 or by public exhibition on a Pillory! you will be sent, by trans-  
 portation, to Botany-Bay, or perhaps be exalted on a gibbet."

Mr. Mathewson said, a prominent feature in the Treason Bill  
 was its temporary nature; it was to terminate with the life of his  
 Majesty; whereas Gentlemen talked of their Liberties being gone  
 for ever. The only argument against this measure was, that the laws  
 are sufficient to protect the King from treasons: this he allowed in  
 all its force; but it appeared from recent transactions that the laws

were

were inadequate to the prevention of that poisonous source from which they sprung, viz. Seditious Assemblies. The other, which he supposed was considered as the most obnoxious Bill, was said to strike at freedom of discussion and the liberty of petition asserted by the Bill of Rights. He thought that some restrictions were particularly necessary at a time when the Sovereign had been insulted, and that insult was connected with Assemblies previously held. (He read Lord Mornington's long Speech on this supposed connection, on King-killing, equalization of property, &c. &c. with many other occasional remarks.)

Dr. Fenwick began by contraverting what had fallen from this Gentleman; should he misrepresent him, which he would not willingly do, he entreated to be set right. Mr. M. said he, began by asserting that sedition did exist. "That it may, that it does exist, is my opinion as well as his. But are there no laws against sedition? Have those laws been attempted to be exercised; and has that exercise failed? Unless he can prove this, I contend that the subject reverts to the point at which my learned friend left it. The Gentleman has mentioned several very seditious expressions from the Speech of Lord Mornington; a Speech which I am inclined to treat with the utmost contempt. Lord Mornington talks of the doctrine of King-killing being inculcated at Copenhagen House. I deny the assertion and call for his proofs. He says they talked of equalization of property, I can here deny it by referring to their own declaration; in which, in language the most beautiful and proper, they shew its fatal consequences. And here I will call upon the Gentleman and all his party to point out one instance in which the Friends of true equality, an equality of Rights, have insinuated any such idea.—No: these insinuations all come from themselves; and I here solemnly warn them to beware of the consequences of suggesting such an idea, for the sake of a little temporary, but absolutely groundless abuse of their opponents. The Gentleman declared that the new law of treason was not essentially different from that already existing. If so, why is the old established law to be changed? Why is that which for 400 years has afforded security to the King and peace of mind to the People, that law which has been repeatedly decided upon, and to the decisions of which we can refer, to be altered for the new and indefinite phraseology now attempted to be introduced? The Gentleman thinks a new law of Treason a light matter, and tauntingly asks whether people have a mind to come as near treason as they can, that they are so disturbed about it. I know this has frequently been said; but I shall never flinch from my duty through the dread of such petty sarcasms as these. I therefore add the opinion of Montesquieu, that "be a country never so free, a law of constructive Treason is enough to make it absolute." So far of these Bills as they affect the Liberties of the People. I now go to the other side, which I trust is not less interesting. Some men will perhaps be startled at this assertion, that nothing is so likely as these Bills to endanger the life of the King; and will quote the title

to prove the contrary. But do a number of treasons secure the Monarch? If so, how secure ought the Emperors of Rome to have been? For they had treasons out of number, not only against themselves, but against their families, their servants, even their statues. The consequence was, that more of them died by the dagger and assassination than in their beds.—Is this an example we ought to follow? For a long series of years the People of Sweden possessed a Form of Liberty; whether a good one or a bad one is not the question here; and the Sovereigns of the Nation lived and died in peace. One man was found bold enough to gratify his ambition by the increase of power; he destroyed the Liberties of his Country, and Ankerstroem destroyed him.—This is another instance: and I call upon the Gentleman to find one instance in which the peaceable Sovereign of a free People did really perish by his People. But the Gentleman has asserted that the liberty of discussion and petition is not infringed, it is only placed under the controul of the Magistrate. I know of no difference between taking away a Right and taking away the exercise of the Right. I cannot possess a right which two men may take away. Highly as I do respect the County Magistrates, it is not to the most respectable among them that I would be obliged for my Liberty. I know of no freedom that is a matter of favour; I know of no freedom that is not a matter of *Rights*.—If I do not misunderstand the Gentleman, he rests the force of his argument upon two points: first, that new restrictions are necessary; second, that these are consistent with Liberty. On the first I only beg leave to observe that, since the Revolution till now, the laws against treason and sedition have been found fully adequate. What, then, has palsied all at once the energy of the laws? Or are they too weighty to be wielded by the feeble hands of Government? Or are laws which would govern any other set of people not able to govern us? Suppose I may be misled into a momentary warmth; the Magistrate may say “Hold your tongue, Sir!” and if I persist, the Constable may carry me to Gaol.—Is this freedom of debate, Gentlemen? The limits between popular Rights and the prerogatives of the Crown were drawn by our ancestors with so fine and masterly a hand, that I should be sorry to trust them to the bungling correction of such men as compose our present Ministry. The wisdom of our ancestors provided two securities for our Liberties; an independent voice in the Legislature—that is done away: and if you allow the other, the right of discussion and the liberty of the press, to be wrested from you, then, Gentlemen, your Liberties must fall. Let other men speak of that maudlin loyalty, which consists in a mere personal attachment. It is to the Constitutional Monarch that I am attached, and that with as warm and sincere a zeal as any subject in the Realm. But do away the Rights and Liberties, and I feel the attachment no more. I shall obey the laws, because it will be prudent to obey them; I shall not join in conspiracies, because I hate it; but as for that glowing warmth of attachment which a freeman alone can feel, that will be gone for ever.”

*Paper*

## Paper XVIII.

*Declaration of, and Form of Association recommended by, the Whig Club.*

WHEN a Society of Private Men feel themselves bound to propose a great National measure to the People, justice to their own character and respect for the public judgment require that they should make known the reasons which have moved them to such a proceeding. We confess that it is, and ought to be unusual, because it can be justified by no ordinary circumstances: but we think that the situation of the Country no longer permits us to confide the support of our principles to the individual exertions of our Members. The Whig Club invariably adhering to the principles of the British Constitution as established at the Revolution, cannot be unconcerned spectators of the destruction of the most important securities of Public Liberty which were provided at that glorious era. The Constitution can, in our judgment, now only be restored by the exercise of that just authority which the National Opinion must ever possess over the proceedings of the Legislature. We therefore deem it our duty, by every means which yet are legal, to appeal to the judgment of the People, and to procure a declaration of their opinion. With this view, we have invited our fellow-subjects to associate for obtaining the Repeal of the two Statutes passed in the present Session of Parliament.

In one of these Statutes we see Public Assemblies of British Subjects, though their proceedings shall be the most orderly and peaceable, and their object unquestionably legal, fettered by restrictions hitherto unknown to the law and practice of this Kingdom. Those Meetings which shall not submit to these new and disgraceful conditions are subjected to dispersion under pain of death; and those which shall be held in compliance with them are made liable to such perpetual and vexatious interruption at the discretion of Magistrates, that there never can be wanting an opportunity for disturbing their deliberations and defeating their objects. Such a law we cannot but regard as repugnant to the genius and character of this free Nation. The Constitution of Great Britain is established on the consent and affection of the People, and can only rest, with dignity or safety, on those genuine foundations of all social authority. When purely administered, it will ever make itself respected by its own beneficence and justice. It has for ages instructed the world by the example of a Government which builds its strength only on its justice, and secures the obedience of its subjects by their love of Liberty. It can neither require the aid of a system of constraint and terror, nor even receive it without danger of destruction. Its ruling principle is the right of the People to manifest their opinion on their public concerns; a right of which the frequent, unrestrained, and fearless  
 exertion

exertion can alone create and preserve in a People, that free spirit and conscious independence, without which the forms of a free Constitution are worthless and unavailing. This right alone guards and protects the secure enjoyment of every other privilege. The House of Commons is our security against the encroachments of the Crown. The King's Prerogatives and the privileges of the House of Peers are our securities against our own Representatives. But no human wisdom can provide any safeguard against a possible combination of all the branches of the Legislature to oppress or betray the Community, but by enabling the Great Body of the Nation freely to pronounce their opinion on the acts and measures of Government by petition and remonstrance to the King, or either House of Parliament, and by speech and publication to their fellow-subjects; unfettered by any previous restraint, and subject only to the animadversion of the law on those overt acts of treason, tumult, disorder, or sedition, which may be committed by individuals under pretence of exercising those invaluable rights. This unrestrained communication of opinion is at once the only check to which it is possible to subject supreme power, and the wisest means for averting popular violences. To watch the exercise of these rights with suspicion, to clog it with jealous and ignominious conditions, and above all, to subject it to the arbitrary discretion of Magistrates appointed by the Crown, is to break that spirit from which such privileges derive their whole use and value. To impose on them any previous restraint is substantially to take them away. They cannot be so restrained without being reduced to a dependence on the pleasure of that very authority upon which they are to operate as a controul, and against which they are reserved as a security. To restrain is therefore to destroy them.

But the provident wisdom of our ancestors did not leave these sacred privileges to rest on the mere foundation of their own justice and necessity. They were solemnly asserted at the Revolution in the instance of Petition, where they have been recently violated. The great Statesmen and Lawyers who framed the *Declaration of Rights*, when they asserted the Right of the People to petition, did, by necessary implication, also assert their Right of assembling to consider such matters as might legally be the subject of Petition. The assertion of a right comprehends that of the means which are necessary for its exercise. The restraints of the present statute therefore, in our opinion, amount to an abrogation of the most important article in that solemn contract between the British Nation and the new race of Princes whom it raised to the Throne.

Though the other statute of which we complain be speciously intitled "An Act for the Safety and Preservation of his Majesty's Person and Government," we are confident that by our opposition we shall not incur the imputation of disloyalty among honourable and reasonable men. We have formed our principles of loyalty upon those of a Parliament which had recent and ample experience

experience of the effect of sanguinary laws, and we shall deliver the Declaration in the memorable language of their record—"The  
 "state of every King, Ruler, and Governor of every Realm, Dominion, or Commonalty, standeth and consisteth more assured by  
 "the love and favour of the subjects towards their Sovereign,  
 "Ruler, or Governor, than in the dread and fear of laws made  
 "with rigorous pains and extreme punishment." 1 Mar. C. i.

Guided by this principle of our ancestors, which appears to us to be as full of truth and wisdom as of humanity, we cannot view without alarm an attempt to remove these boundaries of treasure which were ascertained and established by the Act of King Edward the Third: a law which has been endeared to Englishmen, by the experience of four centuries; by a recollection of the peace and happiness which have ever prevailed in those fortunate periods when it was observed; by a review of that oppression of innocence and insecurity of Government which have almost universally accompanied or followed every departure from its strict letter; and by the zeal and ardour with which so many successive Parliaments, after experience of the mischiefs of such deviations, have recurred, as to a refuge from these miseries to the simplicity, precision, and humane forbearance of that venerable statute.

Another clause of the same Act which authorizes the punishment of transportation on the second conviction, even for words spoken, appears to us equally repugnant to the merciful spirit of the law of England, by applying the punishment of felony to a misdemeanor frequently of no very aggravated guilt, it converts what was designed as the last chastisement of profligate and dangerous offenders to an engine, by which a Minister may crush his political opponents.

The infliction of cruel and unusual punishment is prohibited by the tenth clause of the Bill of Rights; and although that clause was, undoubtedly, pointed at the then recent abuse of judicial discretion in the cases of State Offenders, yet it is founded on a principle which condemns the Legislative introduction of a punishment still more cruel and unusual than any which is recorded even in the detestable annals of the Star Chamber.

It is indeed a punishment which, in the feelings and apprehensions of those who are likely to be the objects of the vengeance of power, is scarce inferior to death. Had it in former times been sanctioned by the Legislature, it might have subjected the most illustrious asserters of our Liberties, a Locke or a Somers, to the combined miseries of banishment, imprisonment, and slavery in a barbarous country with a gang of outcasts and felons. Removed from the view of their fellow-subjects, their sufferings in a remote region are forgotten or unknown, and their spirit is no longer supported by that consolation which they might otherwise have found in general sympathy for an unjust conviction or a cruel punishment, while distance and oblivion deliver the agents of power from that dread of public observation and resentment, which is so wholesome and necessary a check on the tyrannical exercise of authority. The same rigour, which if practiced at home, would

would prefad the alarm of tyranny throughout the Nation, may be inflicted on a distant exile without odium or danger. It is the nature of this punishment to be, at once the most safe for those who inflict, and the most cruel to those who suffer it, to deprive the oppressed of consolation, and to deliver the oppressor from restraint.

The authors of these Statutes do, indeed, expressly admit that they materially restrain the liberty of the subject, but they contend that such restraints are necessary, and that if necessary they are just.

We do not affirm that general principles are never in any degree to give way to the exigency of circumstances. But we assert, that the right of discussion and remonstrance is so essential to the Constitution, that it cannot be controuled or restrained, without a surrender of the Constitution itself. When pleas of necessity are urged, let it never be forgotten that pleas of necessity are the ready instruments and common justifications of power without right, and that the means by which nations are enslaved, have ever been pretended to be necessary to their security. We never can admit that the delinquency of individuals ought to work a forfeiture of the Liberties of a Nation. A necessity for new restraints and penalties could only have arisen, in the present instance, from the inadequacy of the law, which we, on our part, utterly deny, which neither has been, nor can be proved, and which the preambles of these Acts themselves do not venture to assert. Laws, such as these, we should have felt it our duty, at all times, most strenuously to have opposed. But there are many circumstances peculiar to the present time, which appear to us greatly to aggravate their malignity and danger. We cannot forget the system of measures of which they are a part, the dispositions from which they appear to flow, the reasons by which they are supported, and the consequences to which they seem intended to lead.

They originate with Ministers who are making daily encroachments on the Constitution, who patronize the dissemination of opinions which tend to its subversion, and who have never spared any rigour of political prosecution, to crush that freedom of discussion which endangered their own power. They are attempted to be justified on principles fruitful in future encroachments on Liberty, and by reasons which, if they were valid, would compel us to conclude, that the free Constitution of Great Britain is no longer compatible with its quiet, and that our only refuge from Anarchy is in the establishment of Despotism. They are introduced in the midst of a calamitous War, when the solicitude of many good men for Liberty has been weakened, by an artfully excited dread of confusion, and when the overgrown influence of the Crown receives continual accessions of strength from the burdens and distresses of the People. They are the measures of men, who, by an unexampled waste of public money, have acquired unbounded means of corruption. They have been passed into laws when a standing army, great beyond example, is kept up in the heart of the kingdom; when an attempt is systematically, though we trust vainly, pursued to divide the Soldier from their  
Fellow.

Fellow-subjects; at a time when every effort has been employed to subdue the spirit of the People, to pervert their opinions, and to render their most virtuous feelings subservient to the designs of their Oppressors. Thus possessed of the combined influence of delusion, corruption, and terror, the framers of these Acts seem to have thought the favourable moment at length arrived for securing impunity to their own offences, and permanence to the corruptions and abuses of Government, by imposing silence on the People. The project has hitherto been successful. By the extension of the Law of Treason, and by the combination of vague description with cruel punishment in other State Offences Ministers have gained the most formidable engine of political prosecution that can be possessed by a Government. By restraints, amounting almost to prohibition, on the Right of the People to assemble, to deliberate, and to petition, they have shaken the lacus of every other Civil and Political Privilege.

In this awful conjuncture it appears to us to be the duty of every man who wishes to see his Country neither submitted to the yoke of slavery, nor exposed to the dreadful necessity of appealing to force, for the recovery of its Liberties, to unite in a respectful but firm application to the Legislature, for the destruction of these alarming innovations, and the restoration of the ancient Free Constitution of Great Britain. We cannot think that such an effort will be unsuccessful. The usurpations on our Rights are yet recent and immature. The Spirit of this Nation is not, as Ministers may have too hastily supposed, extinct; and prudence itself will not suffer the Legislature to despise the Collective Opinion of the People.

They will rather, we trust, imitate the conduct of that wise Parliament, whose language we have already quoted, and, like them, declare, that "trusting his Majesty's loving subjects will, "for his clemency to them shewed, love, serve, and obey him "the more heartily and faithfully, than for dread and fear of "pains of body, his Majesty is contented and pleased that the "severity of such like extreme, dangerous, and painful laws shall "be abolished, annulled, and made frustrate and void." Mar. C. I.

To obtain this happy result, and to prepare the way for such an application to Parliament, by Petition, as may carry with it the weight and authority of the National Opinion, we have invited our fellow-subjects to unite in the employment of every lawful means for procuring a repeal of these Acts.

The measure which we propose is unquestionably legal and constitutional; and it appears to us to be not only justified, but called for, by the exigency of the times. *When Bad Men conspire, Good Men must associate.*

Resolved, That the following be the  
FORM OF ASSOCIATION,

WE, whose names are hereunto subscribed, calling to mind the virtuous and memorable exertions of our ancestors in all past ages for the public happiness and freedom of this Nation, do solemnly

firmly engage and pledge ourselves to each other and to our Country, to employ every legal and constitutional effort to obtain the repeal of two statutes, the one entitled " An Act for the more effectual preventing Seditious Meetings and Assemblies," the other, " An Act for the Safety and Preservation of his Majesty's Person and Government, against treasonable and seditious practices and attempts;" Statutes which we hold to be subversive of the ancient and undoubted Liberties of Englishmen, as claimed, demanded, and insisted upon at the Glorious Revolution in 1688, and finally declared, asserted, and confirmed by the Bill of Rights,

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Paper XIX.

*Resolutions agreed to at a numerous Meeting of Gentlemen, held at York on the 6th of June, 1797, to consider the Propriety of requesting the Sheriff of Yorkshire to call a Meeting of the County.*

RINGROSE'S TAVERN, YORK, June 6th, 1797.

1. **R**ESOLVED, That we are sincerely attached to the ancient form of our Government by King, Lords, and Commons, and on its just and genuine principles are determined to support that happy Constitution.

2. Resolved, That we condemn the measures of the present Ministers, which we conceive have brought us into a truly perilous and calamitous situation: That we deeply lament the distresses of our Country, and the miseries which we experience from this unfortunate and destructive war: That we most earnestly wish for the preservation of order and tranquillity in the Country, and for the restoration of public credit.

3. Resolved, That we do most earnestly wish for a Peace between this Country and France, on terms consistent with the welfare of Great-Britain.

4. Resolved, That in our opinion good order and public credit can be re-established only by the justice and œconomy of Government.

5. Resolved, That from past experience we should not be justified in placing any farther confidence in his Majesty's present Ministers, whose whole political system we conceive to have been detrimental to the Interests and Liberties of our Country.

6. Resolved, That the postponing of the Requisition to the High Sheriff to call a Meeting of the County, is advisable at this moment, because we are convinced that in a short time the necessity of a County Meeting will be universally acknowledged.

7. Resolved, That we are determined to persevere in our endeavours to procure a return of the blessings of Peace; and in order that these important subjects now brought before the Freeholders

holders of Yorkshire may receive the most calm and mature consideration previous to a County Meeting, that this Meeting be adjourned to Thursday in the next Assize Week, to be held at this place, and then to consider the propriety of resolving to tender their Requisition to the High Sheriff of this County.

8. Resolved, That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to Mr. Wyvill for calling it, and to William Wrightson, Esq; the Chairman, for his conduct in the Chair.

WILLIAM WRIGHTSON,  
Chairman.

*Paper XX.*

*Resolutions agreed to at a numerous Meeting of Gentlemen who had signed the Requisition, and others who were friendly to the Measure, held by Adjournment at York on the 3d of August, 1797.*

Resolved 1st, unanimously,

THAT a Negotiation between this Country and the Republic of France having commenced since the Meeting of the 6th of June, this Meeting, in the present unfinished state of the Negotiation, does not think it expedient to tender their Requisition to the High-Sheriff to call a General Meeting of the Freeholders of the County of York.

Resolved 2d, unanimously,

That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to the Chairman for calling it.

Resolved 3d, unanimously,

That this Meeting be adjourned subject to a call by the Chairman, which he is hereby authorized and requested to make in case the present Negotiation should fail to restore to this Country the blessings of Peace.

WILLIAM WRIGHTSON,  
Chairman.

*Paper XXI.*

*Resolutions intended to be proposed to the County of York in the year 1798, if it had been found expedient in that year to assemble the Freeholders.*

1st RESOLUTION, approving the extension of the Right of Suffrage to Copyholders, certain Leaseholders, and Householders, paying Taxes or Assessments throughout Great-Britain.

ad, Declaring that the Boroughs in their present state are a public nuisance, which if not abated must soon prove destructive to the Rights of the British Nation.

3d, Approving a Petition on these grounds, praying Parliament to effect a suitable Reform in the Representation.

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Paper XXII.

*Address to the Worthy Freeholders of Yorkshire.*

RINGROSE'S, YORK, Feb. 7, 1798.

Gentlemen,

THE distress and danger of the Country are increasing with rapidity. It has been our endeavour to diminish that distress, and to avert that danger, by proposing the means allowed by law, to stop the Minister in his wild career of *War and Predigality*. By your assistance the Nation may yet be rescued from its supine acquiescence; and the farther prosecution of hostilities,—begun in passion, continued now for objects of comparative insignificance, and threatening utter ruin to the Country,—may yet be prevented by your timely interposition.

We are satisfied, that the end we have in view, is the general wish of the Country: A change of *Men and Measures* must soon be effected, or it is evident, that the Nation must be undone. The times indeed are full of distrust and alarm; but our conduct has been sincere and faithful to the Public Interest: we have aimed at obtaining a beneficial and necessary Change, by lawful and pacific means, and by those means alone. We are confident, that this cannot be denied, even by those men who are least disposed to do us justice. And we have had the satisfaction to learn, from information of great extent, that your disposition has become much more favourable to our proposed measures. We have, however, for a short time, resolved to forbear our application to the Sheriff to assemble you, for the purpose of deliberating upon the state of the nation; and we think it our duty to explain our reasons.

On the choice of a fit time for assembling the County, *much*, in our opinion, *very much* depends. Perhaps it is not exaggeration to say, that your decision at the intended Meeting will affect the fate and happiness of England for ages to come. If you meet, when clearly informed of the national difficulties, when the danger of protracting hostilities from motives of obstinate ambition, or any meaner motives of advantage, is evidently seen, the sense of this County, pronounced by a great and decisive Majority of its Freeholders, will have that weight which is undoubtedly due to it with the Nation and the Sovereign; and notwithstanding the greatness of the impending danger, *all may yet be well*.

On

On the contrary, if you were assembled prematurely, the consequence might too probably be fatal to the Country. In that case, the Minister would not have explained the whole of his financial plan:—The exorbitant sums wanted, would not have been stated:—The heavy accumulation of taxes that must be added to the quintuple assessment, or the great length of time, probably many years, for which that quintuple assessment must be endured, would not have been known; and under these circumstances your determination to petition for a change of Men and Measures, by the immense influence of the Crown, and the weakness of a small and indecisive Majority, would be rendered of little avail. In that case we could only look forward with dismay to a prospect full of horror; to the farther protraction of hostilities, till *desperation*, on the one hand, and *criminal ambition*, on the other, may have brought on that *terrible crisis*, which we so anxiously wish to prevent.

The delay of our application to the Sheriff, however, cannot be of long duration. Within a short time, the complete development of the Minister's plan of finance must have taken place. You will then know the burthens which are to be endured: You will have felt, from experience, the extent of their oppressive effects; and you will have a clear view of the still more fatal consequence to the Landed Interest, which prolonged hostilities must unavoidably produce.

For ourselves, we have only to add, that we sincerely wish to be instrumental, in however humble a degree, in restoring *Peace* to our afflicted Country; and in effecting, by lawful and pacific means, and by those means only, such a *change of Men and Measures* as may remove all internal danger, by introducing a *mild and lenient system of Administration*, with a *temperate Correction of Abuses*, instead of the *new system of Rigour and Coercion*, and the *obstinate Refusal to redress acknowledged Grievances*.

By order of the Meeting of the Friends of the Requisition,  
 WILLIAM WRIGHTSON,  
 Chairman.

NUMBER



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## NUMBER I.

*Containing the EDITOR's miscellaneous Correspondence in the year 1792.*

### LETTER I.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to JEREMIAH  
BATLEY, Esq.*

BURTON-HALL, April 4th, 1792.

My Dear Sir,

I Received with pleasure, some posts ago, from Mr. B. Hollis, a copy of a Resolution agreed to by the Constitutional Society on your Motion, \* declaring the adherence of the Society to the principles of our mixed form of Government; I think it was a judicious measure, and indeed absolutely necessary, to guard against the fatal effects of a change of principles by the popular party in London, and their adoption of Mr. Paine's ill-timed, and, in my opinion, pernicious counsels. But, from what I have since learned of the endeavours now using to introduce new Members who are inclined to favour Mr. Paine's projects, I much fear that you and the other judicious supporters of moderate measures in that Society may soon be out-numbered, and entirely over-ruled, by those who will not be content

\* For this Resolution, see the Preliminary Papers prefixed to the Correspondence of this Volume.

with improving the Constitution or any thing short of a Republic on the principles of the American States. I wish, from the bottom of my heart, I may find myself mistaken in these apprehensions; but I think I see too much reason for them, and I have no doubt that the tempting offer of annuities to the poor out of the great estates of the rich, may raise him a formidable party among the lowest of the class, whose fury concurring with national distress on other accounts, might be very destructive indeed. My Defence of Dr. Price, which you have probably seen advertised as soon to come out, is written with a view to promote a Repeal of the Test Act, and a moderate Reformation in Church and State; I mean to send copies of it to you and your son, as soon as it is finished; and if you think such a piece may be of any use among your friends, to stop the rashness of some of the popular party in London, and convince them of the danger of hurting the cause of Liberty by going into measures which, I am confident, the great majority of the nation are not, and if not enraged by more Taxes in our time, probably never will be ready to adopt, I will trouble you with a few copies more. I beg my compliments to your son, and am, with great regard,

Dear Sir,

Most sincerely your's,

C. WYVILL.

LETTER

## LETTER II.

From JEREMIAH BATLEY, Esq; to the Rev.  
C. WYVILL.

April 14th, 1792.

My Dear Sir,

I FEEL, with unaffected compunction, the necessity of preceding an acknowledgment of the receipt of your favour of the 4th inst. by an apology for having omitted to reply to one which you honoured me with some time ago. Conscious, however, that the apparent neglect proceeded from real respect, and a desire to give you the utmost satisfaction, I hope a short statement of the case will procure me your pardon. I had not in my own possession any papers worth transmitting to you; but being promised by Mr. Frost the original Records of the Westminster Association, to which he was Secretary, I was kept in suspense till I heard from my friend David Hartley, and others, that your work was nearly completed. Chagrined at the disappointment, I then ceased to solicit Frost, who appeared, from what cause I cannot divine, unwilling to part with the papers in his hands, though I told him for what purpose I wanted them. I repented that I did not immediately apprise you of my expectations, but the time was elapsed, and I saw no way but to submit my case to your candour, with contrition, when an opportunity offered. I am pleased to find that your sentiments with respect to the present state of Party, and Mr. Paine's Pamphlets, correspond very much with my own. Mr.

Hollis should have told you, that the only alteration made by the Society for Constitutional Information in my Resolution, was the insertion of Mr. Paine's name, exclusively of all more moderate and judicious opponents of Mr. Burke's pernicious principles. I wrote it rather to re-animate the Society, and to remind it and the Public of the true object of the institution, than to resent the illiberal censure of Mr. Burke. There was certainly an apparent inconsistency in recommending a book which affirms we have no Constitution, by a Society instituted, as I conceive, for the preservation of one; but the general tenor of the Resolution, I trusted, would insinuate that the Society only gave a partial assent to Mr. Paine's principles. Previous to this publication, our Society scarcely evidenced a particle of life; but it has now so recovered its strength, that I begin to suspect, instead of stimulants, we must administer sedatives, to moderate its vigour. You will see that we have attracted the notice of other Societies, with whom correspondencies are forming, our Members rapidly increase, and the influence of individuals who formerly had weight, is, I fear, daily diminishing. But to what other cause ought we to attribute this threatening symptom of political licentiousness than to the contemptuous neglect of all rational modes of Reform by those who have the power to give them efficacy? A timely attention to well-founded complaints is the surest method of preserving decent order, respect, and authority in an enlightened age. The theory of our Govern-  
ment

ment is excellent, and the practice of it at present does not perhaps deserve much censure; but being disgracefully deficient in its representative part, we are certainly more indebted to the character of individuals for the good effect it produces, than to the Constitution itself. It is, alas! too true, that in the present state of Parliament, the most upright Minister cannot possibly defend himself against factious motions of opponents, without the aid of corrupt influence; and this we may expect, from the natural infirmities of human nature, will more frequently operate against national interest, than in favour of it. Were the House of Commons always to express the real sense of a majority of the People, oppositions to a Minister so supported would be deemed malignant faction, and faction infamy. Our Government brought to this perfection, would have nothing to dread from the Republican principles artfully disseminated by unprincipled, indigent, and empirical Reformers. The Minister who builds his fame on this solid foundation, will secure to himself immortal glory; and I am unwilling to adopt the idea that Mr. Pitt has abandoned this virtuous ambition.

Much as I rejoice at the subversion of despotism in France, I do not think it has got a political system that we need to envy; nor can its example injure us but by our own negligence. But the licentiousness it necessarily permits, may prove a seducing example, if we leave the imperfections, which time and neglect have introduced into our Government, to beggary and popular discontent to reform.

Independent

Independent of moral considerations, I am confident that it is the true and personal interest of the King, and the privileged orders, to support a new and temperate organization of the House of Commons. Though we are not at this moment alarmed by commotions, a speculative mind, without being romantick, may perceive events not improbable, that would wonderfully facilitate the means of exciting them. There are always men of talents, who having little or no interest in the Country, are ready to seize on such accidents; and though discreet and respectable characters fly from such suspicious counsellors, those who have nothing to lose are willing auditors when acts of injustice and violence are recommended. The extraordinary circumstances of the age have made a strong impression on the minds of many worthy Citizens. I heard yesterday, with much satisfaction, that several Gentlemen of the Whig Club, who have seats in Parliament, have actually formed a new society for the expresse purpose of procuring a reform of the representation. Mr. Grey and Mr. Francis are both members of it, and mean to bring the subject to discussion very speedily. These are new converts, and, I hope, they will bring with them the zeal of proselytes; I, for one, shall be better pleased to have this interesting question in the hands of men of education and property, than in those of mendicants. Should any thing very interesting occur, either in this society, or any other, I will take the liberty of advising you of it. The Revolution Society are going to publish their correspondence with the

the French: I wish it may prove a judicious selection, but I have some reason to doubt it. I thank you for your offer, and shall receive your publications with pleasure, and communicate them where I think they will be useful. Permit me, Sir, to congratulate you on the agreeable additions to your family, since I had the honour of seeing you, that they may live to be real ornaments to the respectable station they are, I hope, destined to fill in society, is the sincere wish of

Dear Sir,

Your much obliged humble Servant,

JER. BATLEY. \*

\* The Editor acknowledges with pleasure the obliging readiness of his friend Mr. Batley, in consenting to his request, that this Letter might appear in the present publication; and also his farther assistance, by communicating the Resolution of the Constitutional Society, which is dated on the 28th of May, 1791, and which is printed among the Preliminary Papers in this Volume.

The Resolution was proposed to the acceptance of that Society by Mr. Batley, the Author of it; and with some slight alterations, it was agreed to. But soon after the date of his Paper, he ceased to attend their Meetings.

Mr. Batley was one of the earliest and most judicious Advocates for a Reformation of Parliament. In his writings he adhered to the principles of moderate Reform, and his pleas for the Rights of the People were distinguished by their substantial sense, and the true spirit of honest Patriotism by which they were evidently dictated. He is happy in a son, Mr. Lodge Batley, who is intitled to equal praise for the soundness of his judgment, for philanthropy and public spirit, guided by moderation. Of both the Father and his worthy Son it may justly be expected that they will be among the last who will either despair of the Cause of Liberty, or cease to support it on the principles of the Constitution.

The Editor begs leave here to acknowledge his obligations to Mr. Lodge Batley for imparting the valuable information which enabled him to give an authentic account of the Proceedings against the Rev. W. D. Shipley, Dean of St. Asaph in the year 1784, which may be found in the 4th Volume of Political Papers, lately published by the Editor, at page 430.

LETTER

## LETTER III.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to JEREMIAH  
BATLEY, Esq.*

BURTON-HALL, May 24th, 1791.

My Dear Sir,

I WAS much obliged and much pleased with your friendly Letter of the 14th of April, which contained a great deal of valuable information respecting the Cause of Reformation, and the Societies formed and forming to promote it. I was particularly happy to find that you and other prudent Friends of Liberty had carried some Resolutions in the Constitutional Society, tending to remove the jealousies which had been excited against that Body, and to which their subsequent conduct has given too much confirmation. These subsequent and less prudent Resolutions are just what Mr. Burke would wish: they countenance much of what he has said, and enable him with some degree of plausibility to maintain, that a Revolution is the object which the Reforming Party really have in view. I think it extremely fortunate, therefore, that a new and most respectable Society has been formed on the principles of moderate Reformation. Their papers hitherto I approve; their having defined their views to be strictly Constitutional, at the outset of their operations, was well; their having declared against attempting a Reform so extensive as that of Universal Suffrage, (for so I understand the Answer to Mr. Cartwright) is in my opinion still better; and, at a proper time, I hope they will see the

the expediency of not departing far from the ground occupied before by the earlier Associations. But though I wish all the Associations, new and old, could be induced to pursue the same, or nearly the same general measure, and in that case should begin to augur well of our success, yet I do not think that any more distinct and special definitions of the objects of the New Society at this time would be prudent. Their measures ought to be taken from the declared sense of the People collected in County Meetings, &c. and from them carried to Parliament, as the wish of the People adopted by the Society. This will induce the People to support them more cordially, it will obviate the objection of the measures originating with a self-created Body, and prevent the possibility of Paine's Party depriving them of the confidence of the Public; of which there will evidently be some danger, if the the New Association form their plan without previous concert and authority from the People in the different Counties and Places in which the individual Members of this Association reside, or are interested. I think the terms should be understood, and tacitly agreed among themselves, as proper to be agitated at the several Public Meetings hereafter to be held in London and the Country, in order to have their sanction and immediate authority; which, if the several Meetings approve with unanimity, or nearly so, then the propositions of the New Association will come before Parliament next Winter with great effect.

I am much obliged to you, my dear Sir, for  
your

your kind wishes for the health and happiness of me and my family, which is very lately increased by the birth of a second son; all, thank God, well. I beg you to be assured equally of my esteem and regard, and sincere good wishes to you and your's. I am,

Dear Sir,

Your faithful humble servant,

C. WYVILL.

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#### LETTER IV.

*From the Rev. THEOPHILUS LINDSEY to the  
Rev. C. WYVILL.*

LONDON, April 19th, 1792.

Dear Sir,

**I** TAKE an early opportunity of thanking you for a noble pamphlet indeed, worthy of one of England's Reformers, and which I trust will excite a zeal for the same wise, temperate, and steady Reform of our whole Constitution, for which you plead with such invincible force of argument, though the Reformers who may now stand forth may not precisely adopt, for instance, the particular plan of amending the System of Parliamentary Representation proposed to the Commons House in 1785, to which I dare say you do not wish to confine them.

A Treatise so choice and full with respect to its matter, and in which every expression is so accurate, just, and well weighed, with such well-drawn portraits, presenting themselves

themselves in proper time and place, must have cost the writer great labour; but it has been well bestowed. Never had the good Dr. Price, but never had the Dissenters in general an equal Defender; and I trust that in time your book will contribute to reason, and to shame the Churchmen out of their ignorance and bad spirit of intolerance towards them. Mr. Burke will be found from what others have said, but very much from the just light in which you have exhibited him, to have raised his head, as a mere political Sophist for a while, only to sink down for ever in greater infamy; and the strong painting of another higher Character and Enemy of all Reformation is such as must strike every eye. I assure you I like the Defence so much, and think it so calculated to be useful, that I have bought a dozen to disperse. A few days before your's arrived, I had printed a Tract on a subject which certainly was intended, and I hope will come in aid of some part of the meliorating plan you propose. As soon as I can learn how to convey it, it shall come to you at Burton for your acceptance.—My wife desires to join in respects to yourself and Mrs. Wyvill, and wishes of health to your amiable children whom we saw; but hopes that Divine Providence will give you more pledges of his favour, and that you and your Lady will live together to see them all fixed in good principles, and happily settled in the world. I remain always,

Dear Sir,

Your obliged and affectionate Servant,

T. LINDSEY.

P. S. Excuse me saying, that I have often wondered a little at a friend continuing to belong to a certain establishment; but I now see the hand of good and of providence in it.\*

\* The Editor cannot conceal that he is conscious of having selected for publication here a short series of Letters politically unimportant, and to some of his Readers wholly uninteresting. Yet he flatters himself he may be allowed to insert this memorial of the friendship which has long subsisted between himself and this amiable and truly venerable man. Their acquaintance began with the attempt in 1772 to free the Clergy of our Established Church, and others, from subscription to the 39 Articles of Religion; on which occasion Mr. Lindsey bore a distinguished part. The Editor, with the zeal of youth, concurred in signing the Petition to Parliament, praying for that indulgence: but though supported by Sir George Savile, and other Members of great respectability, their Petition was rejected. The friendship which commenced on this occasion between Mr. Lindsey and the Editor, has subsisted ever since, not only uninterrupted by their known diversity of sentiment respecting the pre-existence of Christ, but improved and increased by time and the growing conviction felt by each, that their esteem was mutual, and the motives of their conduct were essentially the same. As a Reformer of Religion, Mr. Lindsey was animated by the purest and most virtuous zeal, softened by the benignity of his temper: and though the boldness of his Unitarian doctrine excited the anger of rigid Athanasians, his disinterested conduct in resigning a lucrative and respectable station in the Church, extorted their unwilling commendation. As a Preacher, he was earnest and impressive; his discourses were delivered from the heart, with a mild and affectionate warmth which touched the heart of his audience, resembling what the imagination might conceive of the Evangelist St. John, whose religion was happiness, and whose God was benevolence. To him may be applied, with little alteration, some lines of two of our Poets:

“ Let modest Lindsey, if he will, excell

Ten Metropolitans in preaching well;”

“ Yet is his life the more instructive lesson.”

During a course of more than thirty years the character of this most amiably-virtuous man has continually risen in the estimation of the Editor: he deems him one of the best, and one of the happiest of men, and himself truly fortunate in having thus long enjoyed the advantage of his friendship.

LETTER

J. LINDSEY.

## LETTER V.

*Extract of a Letter from the Rev. C. WYVILL  
to the Rev. THEOPHILUS LINDSEY.*

BURTON-HALL, April 27th, 1792.

My Dear Sir,

I Received your obliging Letter with great pleasure; and though I trust I do not stand very much in need of other inducements beside those arising from a sense of duty and a warm attachment to the rights of conscience to stand forward in their defence, yet I feel that the approbation of worthy friends is most encouraging, and will be a consolation to me, whatever obloquy I may have to support, in consequence of my late publication. I much fear that some of my friends, with whom I have long co-operated in political business, will not concur in sentiment with me upon the other subjects discussed in the Defence of Dr. Price; but still I am confident they will do me the justice to believe that my intention has been good. But from others who are too much prejudiced on the subject of Toleration to listen with any patience to arguments for repealing the Test-Act, who have too bigotted an attachment to the Church to bear the idea of the mildest Reformation, and whose displeasure will not be lessened by any previous good opinion of the author who pleads on the offensive side of these questions, what can I expect but the most virulent abuse, and the most uncharitable hatred? If it must be so, I acquiesce in patience; if it should be otherwise, I shall

I shall rejoice at the unexpected favour which exempts me from that ill treatment which better men and more formidable adversaries to Priestly power have often received.

I shall be much obliged to you, my dear Sir, for your publication, whenever you have an opportunity to send it me ; and also, for the communication of your opinion, when the sentiments of the generality of good men in London appears to you to have undergone any material change respecting Reformation, particularly of our political abuses, which I think likely to take place before the other, not less wanted, in the Church. I am ever,

My dear Sir,

Very cordially your's,

C. WYVILL.

## LETTER VI.

*Extract of a Letter from the Rev. THEOPHILUS  
LINDSEY to the Rev. C. WYVILL.*

LONDON, May 4, 1792.

Dear Sir,

I AM not able to say any thing of the faults found with your Defence, for I have mixed with none but those who greatly approve, and they have not been a few. I would name Mr. Lee amongst the first, though the mode of Reform of the Representation proposed he does not think you yourself would now recommend, but enters not much into that subject. Only I must say that I do not think that you have advanced any thing

thing against Mr. Burke *in particular* but he agrees with you in it. And that Gentleman I believe has sunk much in his reputation with all but the very high Aristocrats indeed.

I am in hope that you will add your name to the new Association for the Reform of Parliament, of which the two Mr Shores are Members, although the Minister has exerted his utmost efforts to check it in the very bud, and unquestionably will succeed with all the timid and interested.

It is thought however, that to qualify such a reprobation of Reform, and to quiet the murmurs a little, Mr. Fox will be permitted to-day to carry his motion for the repeal of the Penal Statutes of the 9th and 10th of William III. and 1st of William IV. as affecting Anti-Trinitarians. Mr. Shore is afraid of this; and would rather that things remained as they are till all Penal Laws whatsoever in Religion are abolished; a ground which Mr. Fox will set out-upon, though glad to carry a part of his demand, if he cannot succeed for the whole. I am always, dear Sir,

Your obliged and faithful Servant,

T. LINDSEY.

#### LETTER VII.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to the Rev.  
THEOPHILUS LINDSEY.*

BURTON-HALL, May 28, 1792.

My Dear Sir,

**I** TAKE the opportunity of a frank to Mr. Shore to write a few lines, to thank you  
for

for the present of your Pamphlet, which I received some time ago; and which I read, as I have done all your former pieces, with the most perfect conviction of the goodness of your intention, with the greatest respect for your character, and an abhorrence of the Laws which would inflict any punishment on the worthy Author; the tendency of whose writings I hold to be good, by promoting a rational discussion of religious subjects, even where he fails to convince me. Sincerity, however, obliges me to say, that I wish you had spoken with less severity of Athanasian Worship, or the Worship of Jesus Christ\*. The charge of Idolatry is a heavy one;

\* This wish proceeded not from the Editor's approbation of either the worship or the creed of Athanasius. He then disapproved them both, and his disapprobation still continues. With the excellent Archbishop Tillotson he joins in "wishing the Church of England were well rid of that creed;" but in renouncing what to him appears to be a system of palpable contradictions and uncharitable denunciations, he approaches nearer to the sentiments of Dr. Clarke, than to those of Dr. Priestley, and his worthy friend here addressed. Yet on a subject on which so many learned, so many virtuous men have formed judgements very different, candour and mutual deference seem peculiarly required; and whenever such sentiments shall prevail in a considerable degree, it may be hoped that a disputatious mode of worship will be willingly abandoned; and the Forms of the Church will be drawn up in language in which every sincere Christian can concur.

After this explicit avowal of his sentiments, his wishes, and his hopes, the Editor feels that it may not be improper here to subjoin a brief explanation of his conduct, in two particular instances, respecting which misconceptions probably may have arisen.

1. It may be thought surprising by others, as it was by his excellent friend, Mr. Lindsey, that he who had embraced opinions so inconsistent with some of the Doctrines and Forms of our Church should have remained so long one of its Ministers. To this he will reply by stating a fact, viz. that he has avoided officiating in the Church, as one of its Ministers, for near thirty years; and by observing that, as he could thus avoid all insincerity, he did not feel himself obliged to quit a station in which, according

one; and many even of those who are not themselves affected by it, do not perceive it to be just. If you and Dr. Priestley had thought yourselves at liberty to speak of that worship with less hardship, perhaps it would have been impossible for evil-minded men to have excited so strong a spirit of Intolerance as appears at present in a Parliament, lately so much disposed to relax the Laws of Persecution.—I most heartily wish that the cause of Truth, Liberty, and Justice, and especially of Benevolence and mutual Charity, may more and more prevail.

I beg my compliments to Mrs. Lindsey, and am ever,

My Dear Sir,

Most sincerely your's,

C. WYVILL.

to his judgment, he could innocently remain; especially, as if he remained in his station, his sentiments in favour of a moderate Ecclesiastical Reform, whenever they were published, might be more likely to meet a candid reception, and consequently to produce a beneficial effect.

2. But it may be asked, How could the Editor conceive himself to be acting innocently, as a Minister of the Church of England, when he was habitually non-resident at his station, and forbore to officiate in any church? To this he will reply, by stating another fact, viz. that, for near thirty years, the remuneration which his two worthy curates, the Rev. J. Firebrace, and after his death, the Rev. Charles Walker, have received from him for performing the whole duty of the benefice at Black-Notley, was what he calculated to be the net amount of its emoluments, according to the sums actually received by him, at the time when the calculation was made, viz. the clear yearly sum of 200*l.* with possession of the parsonage house and garden. He trusts that, in the opinion of candid persons, the fact here stated will exonerate him from blame, as a non-resident, or non-officiating Clergyman of the Church of England.

B.

LETTER

## LETTER VIII.

*Extract of a Letter from the Rev. JOHN  
BOURNE to the Rev. C. WYVILL.*

HULL, April 24th, 1792.

Dear Sir,

**I** AM exceedingly gratified by the honour you have done me in sending me your last publication. And I return you my most cordial thanks for so spirited and judicious a Defence of Dr. Price, and all the Friends to a Reform of Parliament. Your Pamphlet would have done the Cause credit at any time, but is peculiarly seasonable at present, both as an antidote to the aristocratic venom of Mr. Burke, and also as drawing the line between those who are real well wishers to our Constitution, and those who, like Paine, would entirely overturn it; I should rather say, who pretend that we have none. I have not spoken with one Associator since I received your present; and of the two or three on the other side to whom I communicated it, the single remark they made was, that they did not think Mr. Wyvill could have written so coolly and temperately; to which my reply was, I believed they never read you before with so much temper.

When I get it back from a Friend, who has it at present, I shall send it to Mr. Pool, and likewise to Mr. Thomas Williamson, who, tho' he never joined the Association, was always more disposed to think favourably of us than most of those who refused their names. If I do not entirely go along  
with

with you upon the subject of the Test, you will impute it, and perhaps justly, to my being bred in the Balguy School, where the principles of the Alliance were warmly adopted. After saying this, I must, in justice to myself add, that I should not be sorry to see a commission issued, appointing a number of men of moderation and prudence, as well from the Laity as Clergy, to revise and propose alterations in our Liturgy.—With my wife's best compliments, along with my own, to Mrs. Wyvill, as well as yourself, I am, dear Sir,

Your much obliged

And very obedient servant,

JOHN BOURNE.\*

\* The temper and disposition of the Editor, in his political conduct, were known to this respectable correspondent, by their constant co-operation as Members of the Yorkshire Committee. It was natural, therefore, that he should solicit, and most gratifying, after their long separation, to receive from his aged friend his free leave to publish this letter; and it was even affecting to receive the answer granting this leave, written for him by another, and only signed by himself with feeble and unsteady fingers. For the confidence which he has placed in the Editor's discretion, and his zeal to contribute to his exculpation, he cordially thanks Mr. Bourne, and submits this letter to the view of the Public, as his testimonial given by a man truly respectable for his virtue, and for the manly vigour and independence of his character.

Mr. Bourne was intimately connected with Mr. Mason, by a friendship begun at St. John's College in Cambridge; increased after that, by the opportunities of frequent intercourse at Hull, and continued, without interruption, till the death of Mr. Mason. During the Administration of Lord North, he had received the promise of a valuable Crown-benefice; but when it became vacant, the promise was broken, and the Living was given to another, for no reason assigned, or assignable, but his virtuous endeavours, in concurrence with the Yorkshire Gentlemen, to restore the purity of our Parliament. Mr. Bourne bore his disappointment with a dignified superiority of mind, and unshaken perseverance in his principles; and being the first of the Body alluded to, who suffered from Ministerial resentment, he was distinguished by his excellent Friend just named, by the appellation of "The Proto-Martyr of the Association."

LETTER IX.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to the Rev.*

JOHN BOURNE.

BURTON-HALL, May 4, 1792.

My Dear Sir,

**I** THANK you very much for your obliging letter on the subject of my late Pamphlet, and am very glad to find the political part of it meets your approbation. Others, in opposition to Mr. Burke, appeared to me to have gone much too far, and I thought a Pamphlet coming from one who had been forward in support of Liberty, might, by drawing out and recommending a temperate Plan of Reformation, prevent that confusion which must be the consequence of extreme doctrines adopted by any great proportion of the Nation. There is a fermentation begun in the mind of the Public, and it is high time that every Friend to Peace and Constitutional Liberty should consider whether those objects are most likely to be secured by the method in which the majority of the House of Commons concur with Mr. Burke, viz. by stopping all Parliamentary inquiry into every abuse alleged to exist respecting the Constitution, or by the means which the Yorkshire Gentlemen formerly adopted, and, I doubt not, will again adopt, viz. by Petitions and other pacific exertions endeavouring to induce Parliament to do justice to their Constituents. In this way we acted together before, and have no reason to repent of what we have done; and in this way it is not impossible that we may act together again for the same laudable end, although

although in other matters our sentiments may not exactly correspond. For as I have ever been aware, that on the subjects of Religious Liberty, and some farther temperate Reformation of the Church, my opinions were different from those entertained by many other Gentlemen of our Committee, so I conclude they also were apprised of this diversity of sentiment; but, in general, I hope I shall be understood by no means to have intended the Defence of Dr. Price as a recommendation that the measures of a repeal of the Test, and a commission to revise the Forms of the Church, should be proposed at Popular Meetings as the objects of their exertions *in the present disposition of the Nation*; altho' I certainly do think that the Nation is without sufficient reason averse to those measures; that it is right to endeavour to diminish that aversion, and when diminished, that it would even be advisable *at that time* to bring those measures forward at Public Meetings as the best and most likely way to prevent any extreme Reform in Religion, just as our moderate measures of Parliamentary Reform are perhaps the only measures which can effectually defeat the sinister designs of Mr. Paine and the Republican Party in the State. I thank you very much for having endeavoured to set some of your neighbours right in their ideas of my character, and I hope you will continue to think me a Friend to Moderation, as well as Liberty in Church and State.

I am, dear Sir, with great regard,  
 Very sincerely your's,  
 C. WYVILL.

## LETTER X.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to JAMES MARTIN,  
Esq.*

BURTON-HALL, April 28th, 1792.

My Dear Sir,

**I**T gave me great pleasure to receive your letter, in which you express your approbation of my late Pamphlet, with much kindness personally to me, and with much warmth of attachment to the Cause of Toleration. I assure you I very highly value the good opinion of those whom I consider as disinterested and worthy Patriots, which is the only light in which you can be considered; and I should have been happy to have heard your opinion on the present state of Reformation-Politics; particularly, whether you think there is any disposition in the Body of the People of London, among the persons of middling property more especially, to make an attempt to reform the Representation, without which nothing can be safe, and with which every thing that is desirable or agreeable to the general sense of the Public may be obtained. As Mr. Paine endeavours to put the People upon somewhat very different from mere Reformation, and backs his proposal by holding out to the Poor annuities to be had out of the superfluous wealth of the Rich, I thought the extremely dangerous tendency of his licentious doctrines required opposition, as much perhaps as the slavish tendency of the Publications of his Right Hon. Antagonist. I own I should be extremely concerned indeed to find that any considerable

considerable body was formed on principles and with views which I think unjustifiable and pernicious in the extreme; and it seems clearly to be the interest of the real Friends of the Constitution to endeavour that some substantial improvement may be soon obtained, though far short of what we may think our due, lest in the progress of a few years, or even months, events may occur which may prevent the possibility of any thing being done by quiet and orderly means. If Mr. Paine should be able to rouse up the lower classes, their interference will probably be marked by wild work, and all we now possess, whether in private property or public liberty, will be at the mercy of a lawless and furious rabble. I am struck more forcibly with these ideas from almost every letter I receive, having now no doubt that Mr. Paine's Pamphlets have been circulated more attentively and more successfully in Yorkshire and other parts of this kingdom than I was aware of when I wrote the Defence of Dr. Price; and in Ireland matters, I believe, are drawing very fast towards a crisis, from the impulse of the same writings. Whether Government, or the Opposition Aristocracy are duly apprised of these threatening circumstances, I know not, nor whether any serious intention has yet been adopted on either side to take the matter up; but it behoves the People, and particularly those who are at their head, to consider the best means to prevent danger from the extreme doctrines of Paine, and yet to avail themselves of the fermentation produced by them

them to effect some rational and substantial improvement of the Constitution. This was my view in writing the Defence; and in those general ideas I flatter myself that you and many other gentlemen whom I highly respect, do nearly concur. With respect to the particular measures mentioned in that Pamphlet, I am far from thinking they would carry our Constitution to its utmost perfection; and could more be had, could a prospect be opened of obtaining what I admit would be more perfect, without risking the fatal dangers on either hand, from the opposition of a powerful Aristocracy, or the violence of a furious Populace, I should not wish to see those measures, or any short of constitutional perfection, adopted by the Societies now forming in different parts of the kingdom. But conceiving these dangers to be very real and very imminent, I wish some prudent line may be drawn by the advice of the old Friends of Parliamentary Reform in London and elsewhere, to guard against the setting up of new and unconstitutional schemes, and, as far as possible, to unite the People in the same pursuit. This has been done, in some measure, by the Constitutional Society, who have declared themselves averse to any change in Government by King, Lords, and Commons; but I fear you and the other real Friends to Reformation in that body may soon find yourselves outnumbered by the newly-introduced adherents of Mr. Paine and Resolutions passed which are not consistent with that prudent declaration: \* already, indeed,

\* For the Declaration by the Constitutional Society here alluded to, see the Preliminary Papers at the beginning of this Volume.

deed, somewhat of that kind appears to have passed, and an approbation to have been given to Mr. Paine's projects that ill accords with the former practice and avowed principles of the Society. The measures of Political Reformation mentioned in the Defence, as what would now probably satisfy the People, are more perhaps than the Country is yet ready to adopt, and to associate to obtain; while perhaps in London they are short of what the Leading Friends of Reformation think ought to be now aimed at. But in my situation here, as one of the Yorkshire Association, I think it material to the general success of the Cause not to take fresh ground, or to adopt more extensive principles of Parliamentary Reformation, without evidence (which I have not) that the County of York probably would go that length. In what I have stated in the Defence, I think I have reason to assert that the Associated Body in this County, at a proper season, will join; but I do not believe they will go farther. I wish therefore to submit to you, whether the London Reformers will not do well to draw some line that may be exclusive of Paine's projects, and not so greatly different from what the Associations formerly supported as to endanger their not acting together. If the same propositions cannot be made the object of Association every where, which I do not suppose they can be, yet final success will much depend on their not being so different as to prevent the whole weight of the several Associations being united in the same, or very nearly the same direction. I hope, my dear Sir, you will

will excuse my freedom in speaking to you upon this subject. It arises wholly from my sincere wish that the good we have in view may be obtained, not through the hazards of a civil war, but by regular and quiet means, which can only be feasible by something in the nature of a compromise, for the sake of peace. Be assured, my dear Sir, of my most sincere esteem and regard, and that it would give me particular satisfaction to see you here, if any chance should bring you into the North of England.

I am ever your most faithful servant,

C. WYVILL.

## LETTER XI.

*From JAMES MARTIN, Esq; to the Rev.*

C. WYVILL.

DOWNING-STREET, May 24, 1792.

My Dear Sir,

**I** MUCH fear that you must have thought me very uncivil and disrespectful to have remained so long without answering the letter you did me the honour of addressing to me on the 28th of the last month. I can assure you, Sir, that the neglect has not arisen from any want of respect to you, but, on the other hand, from a diffidence in myself to give you any satisfactory answer on the important subject in question. I have lately been particularly prevented from attending Political Meetings by two circumstances. I had the misfortune

tune of being one of the Committee appointed by ballot to try the merits of the Petition on the Cirencester Election. I was confined for five hours almost every day, for nine weeks, in this business. After being engaged in it for about three weeks, I was rendered incapable of applying to any other business which might increase my fatigue, by the accident of being knocked down in the Street, and badly wounded. I am not yet so perfectly recovered but that I feel considerable inconvenience from much writing, or reading, or any long attendance in numerous assemblies. But, exclusive of all this, I have for some years absented myself from the Constitutional, or other Political Societies, on the ideas that a regular attendance in the House of Commons is sufficient public duty for any one man, and that the good to be done in any other way is at least very uncertain.

I trust, my good Sir, that these will not appear to you (whose good opinion I much value) as frivolous reasons for not engaging in a variety of meetings for political purposes. My friends Mr. Batley and his Son, whom I believe you know to be sensible, as well as moderate men, are to dine with me on Saturday. I shall take the liberty of communicating to them the contents of your letter, and I think it very probable that in consequence of our conversation you may hear from one of us. If you should not, you may conclude that matters are in such an uncertain state that, for the present, we cannot mention any thing in such a manner as to be satisfactory.

For

For my own part, I would earnestly recommend good humour and gentleness to all well-meaning persons. Foolish or wicked persons will not be brought to reason by invective and reproaches; and I believe much more mischief is done by harsh language and illiberal accusations of ill designs, than is generally imagined. I really believe that the number of those who wish for mischief and confusion is comparatively very small. Though there may be many of weak judgment and consequent indiscretion, I flatter myself that these will be restrained by men of more sense and prudence.

Believe me, Dear Sir,

Very faithfully your's,

JAMES MARTIN.\*

\* These are humane and wise sentiments; not assumed by this distinguished friend of Liberty to serve a momentary purpose, by the display of feeling which he never felt, but flowing directly from the heart, and corresponding with his temper and habitual conduct. Indeed, the heart with which such sentiments are not congenial, must be a stranger to the emotions of philanthropy; and the man whose conduct is not guided by philanthropy, can be no true friend to Liberty. From pride, from pique, from views of interest or ambition, he may be the partizan of the popular cause; but he will never be its martyr; he will never adhere to it with the inflexible constancy of a Martin, through all the vicissitudes of a long political life, nor with the benevolence and magnanimity of a Fox, renounce the possession of power, on any terms but those on which alone the Rights and Constitutional Freedom of the Nation can be secured.

The Editor feels the utmost satisfaction in reflecting on the friendship of Mr. Martin, and his obligation to him for many former acts of kindness, some of which were of the highest importance, and were acknowledged before, in their proper place. The cordiality with which he assented to the Editor's request to publish this letter, and another of his, dated June 18, 1794, has added a fresh obligation, which he gratefully acknowledges.

LETTER

## LETTER XII.

*From the Rev. WILLIAM MASON to the Rev.  
C. WYVILL.*

ASTON, May 1, 1792.

Dear Sir,

**H**AD I received the present of your Pamphlet sooner than about four days ago, I should not, from the depression of spirits which a shocking event in my small family very lately occasioned, have been able to peruse it; and at present I have done so only in a very cursory manner. The general idea which, however, I have thus obtained of it, I am sorry to say induces me to think its publication very ill-timed, and ill calculated for promoting that great end, the Reformation of Parliamentary Representation, in which measure, I believe, you give me credit for having uniformly acted with you. As you have now chosen to deliver your sentiments so explicitly on another point, which seems to me to have no connection with that, and have blended the two questions so together that, were you so inclined, you cannot now put them asunder; you will not, I suppose, expect that, if the Yorkshire Association should again come into action, you will find yourself joined with equal cordiality by any persons, but those who think precisely as you do in both these matters; which, I am obliged to say, I do not. This, however, you may assure yourself will not prevent me from being what I now subscribe myself,

Dear Sir,

Your very sincere Friend,

W. MASON.

## LETTER XIII.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to the Rev.  
WILLIAM MASON.*

BURTON-HALL, May 10th, 1792.

My Dear Sir,

**I** WILL tell you the truth without reserve; I was not quite prepared for what you have said to me in your letter on my late Publication, and I could neither read it nor answer it without pain. But I must not on that account delay my answer any longer. I now request you to consider whether the Defence of Dr. Price contains any one material opinion respecting the Repeal of the Test Act, or the Reformation of the Church which you have not heard me long ago support in conversation, and which you do not recollect to have seen avowed by me in various Publications. If, from your former knowledge of my sentiments, you were not surprised on the perusal of my Pamphlet to find me declaring in favour of Ecclesiastical Reform and a complete Toleration, (which I believe you were not) why should the public avowal of these sentiments once more put an end to our political union, or lessen the cordiality with which we have long acted together in support of what we both deem necessary, viz. a Reformation in the State. I can see but one reason for it, and that I can truly assure you is founded on a mistake. You may apprehend that it is my intention, whenever our Association is called into action again, to propose that on that Plan of Political Reformation which

which we alike approve, these measures of Toleration and Spiritual Reformation should be engrafted on which our sentiments are not agreed. But I have no hesitation to declare, that I wish these subjects to be kept entirely distinct; that whenever a time may arrive when the Repeal of the Test Act, or some moderate Church Reform, might be proposed with a good prospect of success, I should deem it my duty to support those measures at Public Meetings, which I have also declared before to several Dissenters, but that I do not think such time is yet arrived, and I see no reason to think that it is likely soon to arrive. Our difference of opinion on these subjects may probably long remain, what it has hitherto been, a mere difference in speculation. You have publicly declared your opinion against a Repeal of the Test Act; I as publicly have declared mine for it. I can unite with you as cordially as before in support of the Rights of Election, and I hope you will do the same with me. I wish this from motives of sincere friendship and personal regard, but still more from reasons of a public nature. For if I am not totally mistaken in the political circumstances of this time, we are drawing near to a more serious crisis than we before experienced, when the union of men of moderation in their views of Reform may be the only means of preserving the country from the mischiefs of anarchy and confusion on the one hand, or the suppression of every popular right on the other, with a confirmation of that corrupt system of Government which we  
have

have united to oppose. I believe my publication has been of use to prevent the spreading of wild Republican doctrines, and to promote just ideas of the necessity of some temperate improvements in our Civil Constitution. But still disputes may run high; and to guard against the fatal effects of extremes on either side, it is much to be wished that the great Associated Body of the County of York may continue disposed to act with its former temper and unanimity.

I have the happiness to tell you Mrs. Wyvill has been lately brought to bed of another boy, both now quite as I could wish them.

I am ever, my Dear Sir,

Your very sincere Friend,

C. WYVILL.

#### LETTER XIV.

*From the Rev. WILLIAM MASON to the  
Rev. C. WYVILL.*

COPGROVE, May 21, 1792.

Dear Sir,

I AM very sorry that my letter should have given you the least degree of pain. I am sure it was far from my intention that it should do so; and I still think that I expressed nothing in it but what you must previously have expected that I would, whenever I found myself obliged either to write or talk to you on the subject of your Pamphlet; and it is my wish, in this second letter, not to say more to you than may tend to assure you that should I live

to

to see another County Election, which at my time of life is very doubtful, I shall strictly adhere to those principles of the Yorkshire Association to which I formerly set my hand. With me *Litera scripta manet*, whatever it has done, or may still do, with others of that Body. But to frequent Public Meetings, &c. is what I have for some time resolved sedulously to avoid; neither do I think I shall be easily induced to write any thing concerning Parliamentary Reform, much as I wish its success; or Church Establishment, much as I suspect its subversion, unless my inactivity should be publicly misconstrued to proceed from self-interest, or some other mean party motive, of which my own conscience at present perfectly exculpates me, and I trust will do through the remainder of my days. This said, I hope to maintain that private friendship with you which I have ever professed. Nay, I farther hope that you will not think me more hostile to the Dissenters than my Brother-Trinitarian, Mr. Fox\*, who, once upon a time, did not

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greatly

\* In the debate alluded to, Mr. Fox did profess his adherence to the Church of England; and undoubtedly he still adheres to our Episcopal establishment, as forming a useful, if not a necessary branch of our Constitution. But this profession of our great philosophic Statesman is surely not equivalent to a declaration of his belief of the whole Athanasian Creed, which no one could seriously suppose him to make. On the occasion alluded to, he was, and he still is a friend to the abolition of Tests, and to the equal enjoyment of Civil Rights by every Citizen, whatever may be his religious creed. And the Right of Suffrage in Parliamentary Elections, the Right of Eligibility to sit in Parliament, the Right of Admissibility to serve the Country in any Office of Executive Government, &c. are all Rights of which no Citizen ought to be deprived, merely on account of opinions respecting religion. In these sentiments of Mr. Fox, the Editor avows his concurrence; and

greatly befriend them; and I suspect, were he again in Administration, would not be more in the odour of sanctity with them than Mr. Pitt at present is.

I heartily congratulate you on the accession of another son, and I sincerely wish Mrs. Wyvill a speedy

and measures corresponding with these sentiments, he conceives, would tend to promote the diffusion of knowledge and truth, to secure the establishment of our Church, and to extend general peace and harmony throughout the Empire; and at the same time to augment our means of defence, and more completely to secure us against every attack of an invading Fox. And yet he, no more than Mr. Fox, ought to be considered as one of Mr. Mason's Brother-Trinitarians. But, after this avowal, he will not have justice done him, if he should not be classed with those who most sincerely believe the truth of the Gospel, and who would support a temperate Reformation of the Church, not from indifference to the cause of Religion, not from a hostile wish thus to promote the subversion of our Establishment, but from their deep conviction that thus the influence of rational Religion, and the most important interests of Mankind, would be most effectually promoted.

† If a Satirist less witty than Mr. Mason should ground his ridicule of an obscure individual upon some slight analogy, or distant probability, in such a case, to examine his satire seriously, would be idle as it would be to dissect a bubble, or to untwist the threads of the Gossamer. But when the sarcasm comes from the rival \* of Pope and Horace, and affects the reputation of our great philosophic Statesman, it cannot surely be improper to bestow on it a few moments consideration, and, by opposing facts to ridicule, to disarm it of its sting.

It may be observed, then, that the future opinion of the Dissenters, respecting their Advocate, probably will be formed as other men have usually formed theirs in similar cases, by comparing his then present conduct with the past, particularly as it may relate to that question which is to them peculiarly interesting, viz. the repeal of the Test-Acts, &c. But it is not easy to discover any fact which afforded the slightest presumption in 1792, that Mr. Fox, on any supposable change of situation, would abandon the doctrine of Toleration, and desert the Dissenters. He had not then, indeed, given that pledge on which they so justly rely, that he would not accept an official station, without including the repeal of the Test-Act, as one of his stipulations. But from the earliest part of his political

\* This will not be thought exaggerated praise by those who have read his Heroic Epistle, and some other pieces known to be his, though not publicly owned by Mr. Mason.

a speedy and perfect recovery. I write this from our excellent friend Mr. Duncombe's house, to whom I have made a visit, on finding he was much affected by two late losses,

political life, to the date of this letter, Mr. Fox had uniformly supported every attempt in Parliament to free Dissenters of all denominations, as far as possible, from the hardships of their condition. On the applications to Parliament by the Protestant Dissenting Ministers for relief from the subscription required of them, severally made in the years 1772, 1773, and 1779, Mr. Fox was their advocate. After this assistance had been given, and ultimately with success, the Dissenters were highly satisfied with him, till his coalition with Lord North, in 1783. On that occasion, from a quick sense of duty, they shewed their resentment to Mr. Fox, and opposed that measure, and the subsequent India Bill, to the utmost of their power. And yet, in 1790, he generously introduced their application for the removal of the *Test-Laws*; and the speech he made on that occasion would illuminate a well-informed and comprehensive mind on the subject of Toleration. His application, grounded on a petition for the repeal of the Penal Statutes of King William III. was made on the 12th of May, 1792, with singular force and eloquence, but was negatived, by a majority of 142 against 63; and these statutes, as well as the *Test-Laws*, unfortunately continue in force. On similar applications by the Catholics, in several instances, for relief, about that time, Mr. Fox repeatedly distinguished himself by the liberality of his conduct; and his powerful assistance contributed materially to the success of their applications.

From this plain recital of facts, it is evident, that Mr. Mason, in hazarding the sarcasm in question, laboured under some misapprehension, which it is not easy to trace to its source. It is possible he alluded to the opposition of Mr. Fox, in 1772, to the application of the established Clergy for relief from their subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles. But this, which was the first remarkable action of Mr. Fox's political life, would be rather improperly cited as an instance in which *he had not befriended the Dissenters*. His refusal to abolish that subscription might be felt as a hardship by the petitioning Clergy; it might be lamented by the friends of rational religion, as a bar to the progress of improvement in our National Church; but it marked no unfriendly disposition to the Dissenters. And the subsequent efforts of Mr. Fox in favour of Toleration, have incontestably proved him to be the steady friend of Dissenters of every class, on the most enlarged and generous principles of Toleration.

The Editor has only to add, that the statement of these facts has been taken from a paper communicated by his excellent friend, Dr. Disney, on whose accuracy he relies with confidence, and whose kind assistance he acknowledges with gratitude and pleasure.

and that particularly of our mutual friend Mr. Weddel, whom (notwithstanding our difference in political matters) we both of us sincerely loved. Had not my Whitsuntide duties, and the added one of preaching to a parochial club which I have lately formed, called me back to Aston, I should certainly have accompanied him to Burton-Hall, whither I find he means in a few days to set out.

Believe me to be, my dear Sir,

Your very sincere friend,

W. MASON.

## LETTER XV.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to the Rev.  
WILLIAM MASON.*

BURTON-HALL, May 28th, 1792.

My Dear Sir,

**I** WAS much mortified to find that some indispensable engagements prevented you accompanying Mr. H. Duncombe to Burton last week, as you kindly wished. If you could have given me the pleasure of your company, I think it would have made me happier then than on any former occasion. I am sure the intention or inclination to give it was never more friendly or more obliging. In the course of the summer, perhaps, I may be more fortunate, and therefore I will inform you how I am likely to be engaged. After next week, which I shall spend at Leven-Grove, I shall be at home till the end of June ;

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at that time we propose going to Burlington with all our children, and if we find the sea-air agree with them, we shall stay there till the beginning of September. We shall then return home, and we shall be extremely happy to see you here either at that time, or in June; if that month should be more agreeable to you.

With respect to politics, our sentiments, I believe, are as nearly the same as ever, and not more different on church affairs than they were before. In reality, the difference of our opinions is not so much, perhaps, a difference in principles, as in our fears and apprehensions; for I would no more consent that our religious establishment should be abolished than you would. I perceive that Paine's wild doctrines may too probably prevent any reform in the State, because they excite the fears of many good men; and, for the very same reason, it is not improbable that the violence of Dr. Priestley may retard the acquisition of much good in matters appertaining to religion.

I am, &c.

C. WYVILL.\*

\* The Editor feels with regret, that he ought not to suppress this letter; and yet, that he is not at liberty to expunge an expression, which, according to his opinion at present, conveys an exaggerated censure of the conduct of Dr. Priestley, and consequently may give the Reader an impression of his character which would be too disadvantageous to be just. He ought to publish this letter, because it may serve, in connection with the rest of the series, to explain the rise of that dissention, which, in a short time after this, rendered the re-union of the Yorkshire Gentlemen, on the principles of their Association, totally impracticable. But justice should be done to a truly virtuous and much-persecuted man; and the censure which cannot be expunged, should be stripped of the aggravated meaning which it may be thought to bear, and reduced

## LETTER XVI.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to SAMUEL SHORE,  
Esq.*

BURTON-HALL, May 24, 1792.

My Dear Sir,

**I** RECEIVED your short note from the Committee-Room of the House of Commons, and am happy to find the Defence of Dr. Price meets your approbation and your

reduced to that sense which truth and justice require. It should be, and it is with alacrity confessed, that, in the scale of human merit, Dr. Priestley stands as high as, perhaps, any of his co-temporary worthies; that he has laboured, with indefatigable zeal and ability, to promote the happiness of his fellow-men, by his instructions in morals and religion, and by his discoveries in natural philosophy; that he has borne the most outrageous persecutions of his ungrateful Countrymen with fortitude and magnanimity; that as an advocate for rational religion, and the complete enjoyment of the rights of conscience, he has fearlessly pursued the dictates of his enlightened mind, and thus has attained a high degree of personal dignity and true merit. But Dr. Priestley was the leader of a body of men who claimed concessions which could only be obtained from the consent and co-operation of the Public and the Legislature. And it appears unquestionable now, that his exertions would have been more likely to procure entire freedom of conscience, and to accelerate every practicable and safe Reform in the national establishment of our Church, if there had been, in his polemical writings, less hostility to the powers that are; if he had forborne to advance his claims with a tone of defiance; and had adopted the policy of conciliation, yet without a sacrifice of either probity or sincerity. For a life generously spent in the most useful pursuits, as a Philosopher, a Moralist, and a Divine, Dr. Priestley deserves high commendation; but as a practical Politician and a Reformer, his conduct was less perfect. In those respects, his noble qualities probably led him into error. From his fearless intrepidity, and his warm and disinterested zeal for the promotion of religion, he seems to have been too apt to slight the considerations of prudence, and to pass over those boundaries of safe and beneficial Reform, which a wise policy would prescribe. Hence his hostility to all religious establishments; hence his acknowledged aim, not to reform, but to overturn our National Church! And here the only point of just resemblance between him and Mr. Paine! In every other view of personal character, or of utility to mankind, the superior merits of Dr. Priestley would admit no comparison with the Anglo-American Revolutionist.

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son's. I wish it may do good; and in that case I shall cheerfully stand an attack from bigots and tools of power, whose rage indeed is the surest symptom that a liberal book is written not wholly without effect.—I long for a larger letter from you on the subject of Mr. Fox's Trinitarian Debate, and also on the state of politics in London respecting Reformation, civil and religious. In the country, I am persuaded that the temper and opinions of the majority are more decisively than ever for Parliamentary Reformation. But I have no reason to think that there is any thing like a majority in favour of a Repeal of the Test Act, or a Reformation of the Church. Therefore, though those subjects are united together in the Defence, and in fact also may be united at some future time as the objects of popular pursuit, I am persuaded it would be totally improper now to connect them together at any Public Meeting here, and I should suppose it equally inexpedient in London. I am glad, on this account, to see your new Association has avoided any such intermixture, and on a cursory perusal of the Declaration and Address this morning, I highly approve them both.

I beg my compliments to your son, and hope you have the satisfaction to find that inoculation has answered better with you than it did at Burton; though, thank God, we have now little reason to complain, as my little boy is quite stout, and the rest of the family are well. I am ever,

With great regard, my dear Sir,

Most cordially your's,

C. WYVILL.

## LETTER XVII.

*From* SAMUEL SHORE, Esq; *to the* Rev.  
C. WYVILL.

CLAPHAM, May 3, 1792.

My Dear Sir,

YOU would receive a few hasty lines from me, written in the Committee-Room leading to the gallery of the House of Commons, and which I was obliged to conclude very abruptly to secure a proper situation for the approaching debate. I must now repeat my sincere and cordial thanks for your very manly, liberal, and well-timed Pamphlet, which I have the satisfaction of saying I find to be almost universally approved, and by most highly commended, as it certainly deserves to be. Whether some will continue to speak so of it, since the watch-word given out by the Minister last Monday, may well be doubted. Few expected from him such a declaration as I understand he then made, in order to extinguish, as far as he could, all spirit of Reform; though none were surprised at Burke's presence, nor at his strenuous opposition to every idea of improvement in the Representation of the People. I am very sorry I was not in the gallery; but the scene on Monday then exhibited was so unlooked for, that I had no idea of going thither on the occasion. I say I am concerned I was not present, because on such an interesting topic, when a man of Mr. Pitt's talents and consequence, and of whom I had formed a good opinion, contradicts

dicts his former professions and conduct, I should have wished to have been able to pass my judgment of him from his own words, heard by myself. But from what I read in the papers, and hear on all hands, it appears as if he had not only given up a Reform of Parliament himself, but was inclined to suppress the laudable exertions of others to effect it. You will have heard or read of a new Society, instituted expressly for the sole purpose of promoting a Parliamentary Reform. On my first hearing of this Society, I hesitated some time whether I should become a Member of it or no, and principally because it was originally composed of Opposition Members; therefore I did not know whether party views might not enter into their scheme; but on being apprised of the contrary, and having no objection to the terms of their declaration, which I think strictly conformable to the plan of your late Publication, and to our former Association, I and my son entered our names in a very respectable list of the Members of it, which you will see annexed to the Declaration. I am really hurt to be obliged to think of Mr. Pitt as I must now do, from his behaviour on Monday last, according to what I hear of it; and if the accounts published and related be just, I do not see how the consistent friends of a Reform in the Representation can continue to support him any longer. The Society I have above mentioned will have one of their Meetings next Saturday. I rejoice to see in their number some very respectable converts to Reform, particularly Mr. Baker of Hertfordshire.

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The Slave business, I hope, will be settled tolerably, though not quite as the true friends of humanity and justice could have wished.

With my respectful compliments to Mrs. Wyvill, and remembrances to my young friends,

I remain ever, dear Sir,

Most cordially your's,

SAMUEL SHORE.\*

My son begs his best respects.

\* The worthy Author of this letter, Mr. Shore, is connected with Derbyshire by his most considerable property, and a long residence in that County; with Yorkshire, by property, and by the active part which during several years he took in our political struggles. At an early period of his manhood he was distinguished by the confidence of the independent Gentlemen of Derbyshire, who spontaneously offered to elect him their Representative in Parliament. This flattering offer Mr. Shore thought it prudent to decline. At a subsequent period, he was honoured with the confidence of the Yorkshire Committee, by whom he was appointed one of their Deputies to the General Meeting of Deputies held in London in the years 1780 and 1781. And he has well deserved that confidence, and the high estimation in which his character is held, wherever it is known.

Mr. Shore is a man of an enlightened mind, and of unfulfilled honour, in the genuine sense of that word; ardent in the cause of Civil and Religious Liberty; yet a sincere friend to the principles of moderate Reform, and to rational Freedom, Peace, and Order in the Church as well as in the State. His character has been uniformly marked by a calm and sedate intrepidity, by a disinterested zeal, and a correct consistency of conduct in the pursuit of Public Good.

The Editor feels himself much honoured by the unlimited confidence which Mr. Shore has placed in his discretion, by allowing him, without reserve, to insert any of his letters in this Collection. With his grateful acknowledgments he requests his truly patriotic Friend to accept the assurance of his high regard.

LETTER

## LETTER XVIII.

*From* SAMUEL SHORE, Esq; *to the Rev.*  
C. WYVILL.

CLAPHAM, May 11, 1792.

My Dear Sir,

**A**S you may probably hear various strange and unfounded reports concerning the Sheffield Constitutional Society, I send you on the other side a copy of the best accounts I could procure of it, which I have reason to think is authentic, and which seems to furnish no cause for those alarms which have seized some people's minds at its institution. I had, by a person I knew was acquainted with some of the Members, advised them to omit the exceptionable passages, in a cheap edition of Paine's first book, which they were about publishing, and which I understand they saw the propriety of; but when they had nearly finished printing the book, doubts arose among them whether they ought to publish it without leave from the Author. Leave was therefore asked, and granted upon condition that they printed an unmutated edition of it, and disposed of it to their own Society only. In the last Sheffield Paper (Gale's) of the 4th inst. there is an advertisement from this Society, in which, among other things, they say, "The grand and only object of these Institutions is a fair and equal Representation of the People in Parliament." Thus far I had written when this letter is dated, but being suddenly interrupted, and prevented from resuming my pen during

during the remainder of last week, I am now proceeding to finish my letter on Monday the 14th. The day my letter was begun was an important one, on account of Mr. Fox's Motion for the Repeal of the Religious Penal Statutes. My son and I attended the debate, and were highly gratified with Fox's two speeches, and the others delivered in support of the Motion, also with the very little which the able men who thought fit to oppose it could bring forward against the weighty arguments urged in its favour. Notwithstanding which, you will see by the papers that numbers prevailed on the other side. I fear there is no good account of the debate printed; for Woodfall was ill and not present; and the Morning Chronicle, which some say is now the best Reporter of the debates, tho' not so much at length as Woodfall's Paper, has but a poor account of what was said that day. Mr. Fox's opening speech was calm and clear, and supposed to be one of the best opening speeches he ever made. His reply was excellent. Mr. Smith's answer to Burke was very good and argumentative. Mr. Adam and Lord North both spoke exceeding well on the same side. It was said that Sir Henry Houghton made some good observations, but we could not hear him in the gallery. He appeared to us to speak with more readiness and fluency than he is in general accustomed to do. Burke, who now seems never to attend the House but to oppose good, and to promote mischief, was there full charged, with his pockets stuffed with news-papers and pamphlets,

phlets, from which he read, in his manner, several papers which had a considerable effect upon the House, though his statement of them would not stand the least cool examination from those who were acquainted with the circumstances and the subject. It is a pity one could not have his whole speech exactly as it was delivered, as it would furnish so complete an internal refutation of itself, and exhibit such a mass of absurd and unfounded combinations, with a variety of mistakes and misrepresentations, as well as unwarrantable conclusions. He spoke for upwards of two hours, and when Fox in his reply came to the justification of his own sentiments respecting French affairs, he (Burke) walked across the House, and seated himself on the Treasury Bench, between Pitt and Dundas, to the great entertainment of the whole Assembly. But what can I say of poor Pitt, if I may be permitted the use of such an epithet to a man of his talents and situation, which however seems not inapplicable to one who, on two late important questions, has so flatly contradicted his former declarations, and on inefficient, if not unworthy grounds. I can only say he could not extend his speech on the occasion to much more than a quarter of an hour, and I never saw him lower in the drama. Wilberforce, I can with pleasure mention, voted with Fox, and when we were eating a little supper at his house, between two and three in the morning, he said he never was so hurt with a debate before. He was not at all in spirits, and though he did not declare it, it was natural to conclude

conclude he might be affected by having just witnessed the indifferent figure his friend Pitt cut when at the head of his decided majority. You will have heard from Burgh. I do not think that either he or Wilberforce can disapprove your book, though I do not know their precise opinions upon it.

On Saturday we attended a Meeting of our New Society, which was also an important day, as an answer to a letter from the Constitutional Society was then determined on, both of which you will see in the papers. Though I approve of a great part of the answer, I could not bring myself to vote for it, on account of some expressions it contains, and I was decidedly against the printing of them. On this last question the Meeting was divided, thirty-two on each side, and the Chairman determined it against us. The division arose on the previous question whether that for printing and publishing should then be put or not. The letter from the Constitutional Society was foolish and wrong, and the answer I think not unexceptionable. A Society formed like the new one, confining itself to one great object, and proceeding on moderate and constitutional grounds, must seek for its justification in the firmness and consistency of its conduct, and should not permit itself to be driven by the reproaches of its enemies, or by the inadvertence and imprudence of those who are friendly to its objects, to harshness of expression, or to any measure which may tend to separate the Friends of Liberty, and to alienate the minds of those whose united support it

it must have, in order to obtain its object; for it cannot be supposed to gain any of its now-determined adversaries by any declaration that can be made; and I have no doubt myself, but that the Societies, whose improper approbation of Paine and other similar resolutions I as much deplore as any one, will, by the present behaviour of moderate men, be brought to a thorough acquiescence and full satisfaction in an effectual Reform in the Representation of the People, without extending their ideas farther, when they see that such a plan is taken up with earnestness and vigour. What effect the ministerial cry lately raised against the measure will have in the country, I cannot divine. This, perhaps, should be known before any active proceedings are had for Public County Meetings, if such are judged eligible.—I congratulate you on Mrs. Wyvill being safe in bed, and on another young Patriot being added to your family.—My son unites in best wishes and respects with

Dear Sir,

Your's most cordially,

SAMUEL SHORE.

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May, 1792.

The following is an account I lately received in answer to some queries I sent to Sheffield, in order to obtain as accurate intelligence as I could of the Society there for Constitutional information. The nature of the questions you will perceive by the answers.—“The Society first originated with  
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four or five persons, Mechanics, without having the business in the least suggested them by any one. The leading people in it are considered in general as persons of good characters. It has been an objection against some of the Members, that they have been persons fond of fishing in troubled waters, meaning, it is supposed, the late *Corporation Disputes*.

A Parliamentary Reform is their professed object, and the Friends of Liberty believe they keep this object in view; though timid persons, and those who are alarmed at the mention of a Reform, ascribe widely different motives to them, and assert that they aim at nothing but confusion and disorder. The writer of this has frequently conversed with some of the leading Members, whom he has found men of sound understanding, with their minds open to information. Upon questioning them with respect to their views, they have always declared, that all they wished was to spread information amongst the lower classes of people, and to convince them of the existence of abuses, in order that they might join, whenever persons of consequence should think it expedient to come forward, by Petition, or any other legal peaceable way, to obtain a Reform in Parliament.

There are a few Quakers who are Members, but it has been said they are not acknowledged by the Body. Some persons of the first consequence amongst them, however, do not disapprove of the Society's proceedings, though

though they do not appear in the business.—  
A number of Methodists are Members.

It is generally supposed that the late Resolutions, which appeared in the papers, were suggested by some friend or friends of Mr. Paine from London; they were however heartily resolved by the Society.

The Society spreads into all the villages in the neighbourhood. Active persons in the Society make a point of going out into the villages to induce the people to associate. Many of the substantial inhabitants feel alarmed; others think it is not in the Society's power to effect any thing; and others look upon their growing strength, and peaceable orderly behaviour, as likely to be in time of the greatest service to the country; and it has lately been reported, that a Society of substantial persons was about to co-operate with the present Society. Such an one, it is known, has been in agitation; but those who were to compose it, their number being small, seem to want that resolution which distinguishes their humble brethren."

Another account says, "That the Society commenced during the disturbances last summer at Sheffield, which seemed to those who set it on foot to arise from ignorance and licentiousness; and it was the opinion of those founders of the Society, that by instituting orderly and regular Meetings, to communicate and spread instruction and information to the lower class of people, and to suggest peaceable measures for gradual improvement in such parts of Government as the people at large were much interested in, would be a

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very likely and radical means of restoring and securing order and regularity amongst that class of people. One of the Meetings, at which a person was accidentally present, was conducted with order and regularity, it began with the Chairman's reading the minutes of the preceding Meeting, and afterwards several Members in succession read selected passages, or whole publications that were short, for the instruction of the Meeting, all in favour of Liberty and peaceable Reforms, and particularly respecting the inadequacy of the present state of Representation."

A few days ago I had a letter from Manchester, which contains the following account: "The principles of Freedom are spreading here, (at Manchester) and since this time last year there is a much greater alteration in people's sentiments, in and about Manchester, than could possibly have been expected by the warmest and most sanguine advocates of Liberty. There has lately been formed two Societies in Manchester, of the middling and lower orders, and they are increasing in number very fast: their object is an Equal Representation in Parliament, and which they are determined firmly to adhere to till it is obtained. They profess themselves friends to peace and good order, and that, so far from wishing to create any riot or confusion, their intention is to be the first to quell any. They have some very sensible well-informed people amongst them."

LETTER

## LETTER XIX.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to SAMUEL SHORE,  
Esq.*

BURTON-HALL, May 28, 1792.

My Dear Sir,

I AM much obliged to you for your intelligence respecting the Sheffield Association, some of whose papers I mean to publish in the Collection. But, notwithstanding their professions of peace, I am not surpris'd to find that many persons are very apprehensive of tumults at that place, and I think these fears will rather increase than diminish as the Association extends itself more into the neighbouring country. It is unfortunate for the public cause, that Mr. Paine took such unconstitutional ground, and has formed a party for a Republic among the lower classes of the people, by holding out to them the prospect of plundering the rich. After having stirred up such ideas in many parts of the three kingdoms, he still goes unprosecuted, and I am glad of it; I wish he had been unnoticed too by Proclamation. But I am satisfied he has excited such fears among the great majority of quiet people, as will be found very difficult to remove, and will operate more, in all probability, against any measures of Reformation, however temperate they may be, than any other circumstance whatever. Without such a plea, Mr. Pitt would have found it almost impossible to object to the motion of the new Association, and many who now will follow him in that objection, would not have followed

him had it been made in less plausible circumstances. I, for one, do therefore approve of the new Association setting their faces fully and resolutely against Mr. Paine, even though it be attended with a rupture with the Constitutional Society, which, by having given their sanction to Paine's most pernicious projects, has made it necessary for your Society to disclaim all fellowship or communication with them. This is, I own, an unfortunate circumstance for the cause at first setting out; but as nothing can be done upon Republican ground, or in our situation ought to be wished, I think the sooner the popular party give up every idea of that kind, the better it will be for the Public; and it is material, not only that such wild schemes should be abandoned, but that every suspicion of a partiality to them should be done away as completely and as speedily as possible. For this reason I much question whether it will be prudent to circulate even the castrated edition of Paine's pamphlets. If all that leads to Republicanism be struck out of this edition, it must be a mangled, mutilated piece, and hardly can be intelligible, or any way coherent. If only a few of the most exceptionable phrases be expunged, the general tendency of the pamphlet will be the same as before, and the circulation of it will but prolong suspicion. With respect to Mr. Pitt's late conduct on the notice given by Mr. Grey, and on Mr. Fox's Motion against Persecution, my sentiments agree very much with yours. It has lost him many friends in Yorkshire; and I will venture to predict, that if he perseveres in this conduct,

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his inconstitence will be reprobated by every Friend of Freedom and Toleration in the kingdom. I still am willing to hope, however, that he may see reason to change his conduct next winter on the great question then to be brought before Parliament. I beg my compliments to your son, and am ever,

Dear Sir,

Most cordially your's,

C. WYVILL.

## LETTER XX.

*From RALPH-MILBANKE, Esq; to the Rev.  
C. WYVILL.*

*SMERBURN, May 5, 1792.*

Dear Sir,

I HAVE had the pleasure of receiving your letter, and some hours after the packet you had been so obliging as to send me arrived; for which allow me to return Mrs. Milbanke's thanks and mine. I will take care to send the pamphlets according to their directions. You will probably have taken notice that I have signed the two general propositions respecting a Reform of Parliament agreed upon at a Meeting at the Freemasons' Tavern on the 26th of April. It has invariably been my opinion that abuses had, from length of time and other causes, crept into the Constitution, and that the correction of them ought to be attended to by the Legislature. But the Legislature itself, and particularly the House of Commons, though originally as perfect as the knowledge and nature of the times would admit, having now de-

viated from the point of perfection upon which it had been formed, and this branch being generally the spring of all evil and all good, no improvement could be expected when the source from which it should originate was defective. Conceiving, therefore, that the first step should be a Reform of Parliament, I had no hesitation in subscribing my name, but, at the same time, wish it to be understood that my attachment to the principle and ground-work of our Constitution (namely, King, Lords and Commons) is so strong that though I would correct abuses, it should be with a moderate and cautious hand, with a view to times and circumstances, and not by stirring up or alarming the people, the consequences of which cannot be foreseen, but by a temperate and judicious mode of proceeding, so as to remedy evils sooner or later, which have no reference to the spirit of our Constitution, by a constant attention to its principles, by a steady resolution to preserve its balance, and (to make use of the words in the late Address to the People) not to change, but to restore; not to displace, but to reinstate the Constitution upon its true principles and original ground.

I must now beg to assure you how much Mrs. Milbanke and myself feel ourselves obliged by Mrs. Wyvill's and your kind solicitude on the approaching event, of which I will most undoubtedly give you early intelligence.†

I am, dear Sir, with great regard,

Your's very sincerely,

RA. MILBANKE.

† It was a great satisfaction to the Editor to receive permission to publish this letter of his worthy Friend, and another of his,  
dated

## LETTER XXI.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to RALPH  
MILBANKE, Esq.*

BURTON-HALL, May 21, 1792.

My Dear Sir,

**I** HAVE this moment received the letter from you, with the pleasing intelligence for which I have been waiting with anxiety for several days. I most heartily congratulate you on the safety of Mrs. Milbanke, and the birth of your daughter, and I hope you will be able to give me the farther satisfaction, in a few posts, that the present good appearances have continued, and Mrs. Milbanke has recovered as fast as could be wished. And after this happy addition to your family, I trust another

dated Jan. 13th, 1795, exactly as they were written. He wished to publish them without expunging those passages which contain only expressions of private esteem and friendship; because the Reader thus will be more clearly satisfied that he has before him the genuine sentiments of the Writer confidentially imparted to a Friend, without art or disguise, and not a piece intended for the future inspection of the Public. There is, perhaps, not one of our Public Men who is more generally known to be in his temper and disposition the very reverse of all that constitutes the true Jacobinical character; not one whose candour, benevolence, and suavity of manners more completely exempt him from the slightest suspicion that he is capable of concurring in schemes calculated to effect a bloody Revolution. But the letter before us was written without art or study, to a friend, at the very time when the writer had just embarked with the Friends of the People in their generous enterprise to correct and reform our Representative Assembly. In the judgment of candid men, therefore, it will be considered as not only proving the moderation of his political views, and his purpose resolutely to adhere to the Constitution, but as affording a reasonable ground of assurance, also, that the views and political principles of the Body to which he had joined himself, were similar to his own: their Political Faith, it may be justly concluded, nearly resembled his, and his moderation was a pledge of theirs: if he was most sincere in his professions privately to a Friend, (which cannot admit a doubt) the sincerity of their Public Declarations ought surely to be deemed unquestionable.

year

year will present you with a boy, which all your friends wish, and none more sincerely than myself.

I have received the papers of your new Society for Reformation, which I much approve. The ground you have taken hitherto is right, in my opinion, and you have defined your views as far as in the present stage of your undertaking is expedient. You have declared, in opposition to Mr. Paine and the Republicans, your resolution to adhere to the general principles of the Constitution, at the very outset of your Association; and this morning, I find, you have answered a letter from the Constitutional Society with great force and equal prudence; in such a manner as must still more effectually remove all scruples and doubts which timid men might yet entertain, and which the Enemies of Reformation will never cease endeavouring to excite. Thus far, I think, all stands well and upon firm ground. But I wish to suggest to you the propriety of some further limitation of your views at a proper time, and more particularly the necessity there is, if you would have the People support you with vigour, not only that safe and temperate plans should be proposed to Parliament by your Society, but that, as much as possible, the people, in County and other Meetings, should be induced first to adopt those plans, and afterwards your Society take them from the County Meetings, and propose them to Parliament; by which conduct you will secure the support of the people, and obviate the objection that these measures come from a self-created body.

Another

Another consideration I wish to offer to you is, that it would be prudent to vary (at the County Meetings which I suppose will be held in Durham and Northumberland) as little as possible from the general outline that has been traced before by other Counties and Places, which have supported the cause of Reformation on moderate principles. By adopting at your Meetings nearly the same general idea, for instance, respecting the Representation, which was approved in Yorkshire about seven or eight years ago, and which was taken by Mr. Pitt as the ground of his plan, you would secure the co-operation of Yorkshire against every effort of the Minister's immediate friends, and probably those of Lord Fitzwilliam too, and, by the same means, make it very difficult for Mr. Pitt to oppose in Parliament what was his own measure, or nearly so; and, if he should oppose it, would make it impossible for him to excuse his desertion of his old principles. (The immediate friends of Mr. Pitt, whom I allude to as likely to do what they can to prevent Yorkshire joining with you, are the Duke of Leeds, Lord Salisbury, Lord Mulgrave, and some others of inferior note.) Of the sentiments of Mr. Wilberforce and Mr. Duncombe, respecting the propriety of renewing the attempt of Reformation next winter, I do not mean to speak positively, as I really do not know them with certainty; but I flatter myself they will not separate from their old friends, who adhere to these necessary measures of Reformation, notwithstanding the declaration of Mr. Pitt's hostility to the motion

motion of Mr. Grey. I own very frankly to you, I am one of many in this part of the country who are extremely hurt by that declaration of Mr. Pitt's, who think his objection to it, in point of time, to be weak, and who apprehend danger only from the refusal of Government to comply with the wishes of the People. In my opinion it is always a proper time to do national justice, and more particularly in a season of peace and prosperity, and when the People shew an increasing earnestness that justice may be granted. If Mr. Pitt should persevere next winter to resist all application for the redress of those grievances which himself admits to exist, under the pretence that it is dangerous to redress them, I may venture to assure you he will not have many friends left in any part of Yorkshire that I am acquainted with.

Mrs. Wyvill, who is now quite recovered, begs to join me in every good wish to Mrs. Milbanke, and I am,

My dear Sir,

With great regard,

Your's most sincerely,

C. WYVILL.

## LETTER XXII.

*From Professor DUNBAR to the Rev. C. WYVILL.*

LONDON, 5th May, 1792.

No. 3, Spur-Street, Leicester Square.

Rev. Sir,

**T**HOUGH not honoured with your personal acquaintance, I cannot suppress my approbation of your performance, entitled a  
Defence

Defence of Dr. Price and the Reformers of England; a performance, in my opinion, so liberal, so temperate, and so argumentative, that it cannot be regarded with indifference by the British Nation.

My personal acquaintance with the late Dr. Price, and my coincidence in sentiment with your masterly vindication of his character, I offer as a further apology for this intrusion. Your opinions of Mr. Paine and Dr. Price are discriminated with exact propriety. Paine's motives of action were more equivocal, his principles more questionable, his enthusiasm more excessive, and his ideas of Government, though incorporated with many solid observations, may approach a dangerous extreme. Yet Paine's productions, as well as Burke's, from whatever principles they originated, have operated with advantage on the public mind, by promoting discussions eminently interesting to a Free People in an enlightened age.

A pure system of Government, like a pure system of Theology, invites discussion, and the fall of superstition is not more essential to sound religion, than the fall of every species of tyranny to sound policy and the flourishing condition of nations. Freedom of discussion implies in it an appeal to reason, and to preclude that discussion by penal laws, or by any exertions of authority, is treachery against the Constitution in a free Government, and in an arbitrary Government, the consummation of tyranny. *Paine* and *Burke*, as antipodes in politics, may go round the globe without detriment to mankind, and the opposition of  
contending

contending theories will maintain that equilibrium in the system of thinking, and in the passions of men, which is the best preparative imaginable for rational Reform. Give but liberty to the press, Reason is triumphant, and Despotism and Anarchy will equally disappear among nations.

Lord Verulum, in the last century, formed the design of rebuilding Science from the foundation. Men of Science in France, in the present century, have in some degree realized that design in the Philosophy of Government. To erect, therefore, a nobler edifice on the broad foundations of the Rights of Men, was the only alternative for a People emerging into Freedom, and exonerating themselves from that load of oppression which had been endured for ages. But it is the glory of the English Constitution to be susceptible of improvement suitable to the vicissitudes of society, the alteration of circumstances, and the progressive civilization of the world. To sustain, therefore, this venerable fabric by Constitutional Repair and gradual Reform, is the noblest effort of Patriotism and of Political Wisdom.

The avowed principles of the Association here, under the appellation of the *Friends of the People*, seem to correspond exactly with your temperate plan. And the introduction of the subject of Parliamentary Reform into the House of Commons by Mr. Grey, must give ample scope to this interesting discussion. Every Briton, every man, seems to have a right directly or indirectly to some political existence; and a more Equal Representation  
of

of the People seems to be the panacea of corruption in every Government. I regret exceedingly that the Minister of this Country has not maintained that consistency on the subject of Reform for which you gave him credit by a generous anticipation. But the more averse the British Senate is to free discussion and rational Reform, the more is the national jealousy excited, and the more unentitled are the Members of that Senate to be called the Representatives of the People.

The absolute necessity of Reform rises in proportion to the reluctance and antipathy with which it is regarded by those orders of men, in whose hands are the engines of corruption, and who are in possession of unconstitutional influence. Permit me now to mention that I belong to the University of Aberdeen, and am Author of a Publication entitled *Essays* on the History of Mankind. Far be it from me, Sir, on these accounts, or on any other, to arrogate to myself literary pre-eminence. Yet my *profession*, at least, is numbered among the learned; and when I resume my Lectures on the Philosophy of Government, I shall think it an incumbent duty to mention your performance with just commendation. Mean-while I have the honour to be, with high respect,

Rev. Sir,

Your most obedient

and most humble servant,

JAMES DUNBAR.\*

\* The letters in this Collection are considered generally by the Editor to have been private, or confidential letters; and without the consent of their Authors having been previously obtained, none have been inserted in these Volumes. The only exception to this  
assertion

## LETTER XXIII.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to Professor DUNBAR**BURTON-HALL, near BEDALE, Yorkshires,  
May 16th, 1792.*

Sir,

**I** HAVE received the honour of your letter, and return you my best thanks for the very obliging manner in which you have been pleased to express your approbation of the Defence of Dr. Price and the Reformers of *England*. The nature of my subject precluded me from taking notice of those gross abuses in the Representation of the People in

assertion is to be found in such letters as have been written by persons who are now dead. In this case, a discretionary right appears to the Editor to have devolved upon him, to decide whether the letters in question ought to be published, or not; and this decision could only be made properly upon a due consideration what public good might be expected to result from their appearance.

With regard to Professor Dunbar, that worthy man, and the respectable author of this letter, for such he appears to have been, the Editor has to observe, that supposing him still living, he applied for his consent to the publication of it; and from a Relative received an answer, intimating that he died five years ago, and expressly declaring the non-consent of that Relative to the proposed publication. In pursuance therefore of the right devolved upon him by the death of Professor Dunbar, and because the letter in question contains just and liberal sentiments on points still much disputed, the Editor determined that it ought to be published, but not without feeling considerable regret that he could not gratify the Relative alluded to. He willingly would, if he could have done it without acting in a manner not consistent with his ideas of public duty.

It may not be improper here to add, that some of the Editor's letters appear unaccompanied by those letters of his Correspondents to which they relate. Thus in this Number, the last three letters were written by the Editor to William Burgh, Esq; but his share of the correspondence is suppressed; not because it was considered as unimportant or unfit to be published, but because his permission to publish it was asked, but was not obtained. For this reason, other letters written to the Editor are also suppressed; and in the case of any part of the Correspondence being suppressed for a different reason, an explanation is given.

*Scotland,*

Scotland, which affects, I believe, not only every Borough and City, but every County of that part of the Kingdom; but no one wishes more ardently than I do, that whenever a systematical improvement of the popular branch of the Constitution shall be procured for England, Scotland may obtain a similar improvement, by the abolition of fictitious Votes, and the extension of the Right of Suffrage to the general body of the Freeholders in the Counties, and by throwing open to the Inhabitants of the Boroughs and Cities that right of Municipal as well as Parliamentary Election, which self-elected Corporations have universally monopolized. At the same time, when the increasing wealth and population of your Northern part of the kingdom are considered, it is impossible to overlook the great disproportion which now exists, though at the Union a fair proportion may have been established, between the Representation which was allowed to remain in England, and that which was allotted to Scotland. If therefore we shall be fortunate enough to see the popular part of the Constitution in England amended on the principles formerly proposed by Mr. Pitt, I hope *that* may be a fit opportunity to rectify this disproportion in Scotland by a small addition of eight or ten members to the House of Commons. By adding that number, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Aberdeen might be put upon a footing of equality, as they certainly ought, with the great Towns in this part of the Island; and the Counties which at present are intitled only to the privilege of alternate Representation, might be freed

freed from that disgraceful peculiarity, and allowed constantly and upon equal terms to participate in the Right of Representation with the other Counties of Scotland. That our common Constitution may be rectified on the same equitable principles in every part of the Kingdom, is the wish of every just and prudent Patriot; and the Yorkshire Gentlemen, with whom I have long had the honour to act, expressly resolved, a short time before Mr. Pitt's propositions of Reform were offered to Parliament, that some of the measures which I have here mentioned respecting the Right of Election in Scotland, should be considered as forming part of that plan of Political Reformation which they wished to see accomplished. But from the novelty of the subject at that time, and from the difficulty of a timely and general communication of sentiments in different parts of the Kingdom, no one district or place in Scotland concurred with Yorkshire, &c. in petitioning Parliament on this subject, previously to the agitation of Mr. Pitt's propositions. But from the uneasiness which the body of the People in Scotland manifest under the great grievances here noticed, from their increasing attachment to Liberty, and the decided approbation which yourself and other respectable Writers in Scotland have given to the Cause of Political Reformation, I trust the time is not far distant when the interposition of the Scotch Counties and principal Towns will add their important weight to that of the rational Friends of Liberty in these Southern Districts. That a considerable degree of fermentation has taken place

place in the public mind, has for some time been evident; that doctrines and proposals calculated to inflame the populace, and excite them to acts of great injustice, have been circulated with industry, and in many places have made proselytes, is certain. But I can by no means agree with Mr. Pitt, that these circumstances forbid any attempt at present to reform those abuses which himself admits to exist. I think it is always a proper time to do justice, and to redress the grievances of a Nation; and the more proper, when the grievances are more felt and complained of. If Mr. Pitt had resolved to act by this rule, he might have been the Umpire of contending parties, and by the assistance of the Friends of a rational Reform, might have obtained for his Country such a melioration of the Constitution as would have been of inestimable value, whether considered as preventative of future convulsions in the Country, or as securing the positive advantages of a just and incorrupt system of Government. By his unlooked-for declaration of opposition to the intended Motion of Mr. Grey, (if persevered in) he will irrecoverably lose his credit with the free and independent part of the community, and they will lose a very powerful Supporter of the cause of Reformation. I much regret, therefore, his late impolitic and strangely inconsistent conduct. I thought I saw hazard in our situation before, and now think it increased by the very measure which he seems to have thought necessary to keep all quiet. But I am convinced that in a Country

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like this, enjoying a considerable share of Liberty, all attempts to stifle inquiry will be ineffectual, and to support grievances, pretending that it is dangerous to redress them, will only lead to greater extremities. I most sincerely wish that wise, and good, and disinterested men in all parts of the kingdom may unite their influence to prevent those calamities to which the interested adherents of Aristocracy on the one hand, and the violent Partizans of Republican Equality on the other, seem willing to expose us.

I am, Sir,

Your obliged and most  
obedient servant,

C. WYVILL.

#### LETTER XXIV.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to WILLIAM  
BURGH, Esq.*

BURTON-HALL, May 16, 1792.

My Dear Sir,

IT gives me great pleasure to find that you approve the political part of my late Publication; and still greater, that your friendship endures in that part which relates to the repeal of the Test Act, &c. what I did not hope you would entirely agree to. I had not been a day in York, before I felt how very kind your admonition was respecting Paine and the possible mistake of the Title-Page; and tho', I dare say, you see I could not have altered the Title-Page to be at once less liable to misconception

ception and equally descriptive of the contents of the Book, yet the next best thing was to do what your kind letter warned me, and which I am happy to find has completely answered your wish and mine, as I find my opinion of Paine's politics is more taken from the short passage relating to him in the Preface, than from what is said more at large in the Defence of Price, in strong terms condemning him as a most dangerous Enthusiast in Politics. I do assure you I hold his schemes in as much abhorrence as you do, and had I been apprised six weeks ago, that his principles are spreading not only at Sheffield and Manchester, but also in the neighbourhood of Leeds and Wakefield, particularly, as I have been lately informed, among the Methodists, also in Scotland and Ireland to a very alarming degree, I certainly should have expressed my detestation \* of the man, and his pernicious projects, with greater force and vehemence than I have employed against him. But, on the other hand, I own I cannot comprehend what good reason can be alleged by Mr. Pitt for discouraging any discussion of the question of Reform *at this time*, or in *the mode* proposed by the New Association. When discontents have arisen in any country, they seldom are to be stopt by forbidding inquiry, or telling

\* The expression in this passage is not what can be approved. To distrust the man, whose political schemes we think pernicious, is unavoidable; to shun him may be well allowed; to oppose him may be a duty; but to detest him seems incompatible with those feelings of good-will, which no contrariety of opinion, no opposition in the conduct of public business should be suffered to suppress.

the Public that it is not safe to redress their grievances. When Mr. Pitt moved the business himself, he failed, not because he was treacherous and duped the Reformers, as his enemies pretend, but because the Body of the Nation did not wish that Parliament should be reformed; perhaps it does not yet wish it, but it is evident that the wish is much more general than it was. To say, therefore, as Mr. Pitt has said, that the time is improper, because the symptoms of dissatisfaction increase, and there is even a possibility that a Party may soon be formed who would carry their schemes of Reformation to an unjustifiable extreme, is to say, that the complaints of a small part of the Nation ought to be attended to, but more general discontent ought to be slighted by Government; that what a Nation does not want to have, should be granted, and what a Nation begins to wish to have, should be refused. But *the mode* Mr. Pitt objects to; and justly I admit, if the New Association do not consult the Body of the People, and take their measure from them, or at least obtain their authority to propose it. But this is what they profess to be their intention; and if we take their plan in this light, it seems to resemble very much what was done at the Thatched-House Tavern in the year 1782 or 3, when Mr. Pitt and the Duke of Richmond were present, and agreed with a Body nearly as numerous as that at Freemasons' Tavern, to apply to the People in the course of the summer. By his late conduct, Mr. Pitt, I believe, will lose much of his credit

dit with the People. He may be respected as an able Minister, he may be supported as a successful Minister, but as a Patriot Minister, willing to risque his power that he may obtain justice and constitutional safety for the Nation, he is in danger never more to be esteemed; and should he persevere in the conduct lately adopted, I think I may safely predict, that his influence with the free and disinterested part of the Nation will be irrecoverably lost. I wish he may next winter retrieve the false step he has now taken; for if the appearances in our political hemisphere do not too much alarm me, and so mislead my judgment, times of more hot contention are approaching than we have yet seen. But for the late steps of Mr. Pitt, he might have been the Umpire between the two contending parties who refuse all concession, and want more than can be conceded; and by his authority and timely insisting on some moderate compliance, might have obtained a boon of great value for his country, considered in its intrinsic worth, and doubly valuable when considered as the means of preventing the greatest future calamities. If Mr. Pitt has disqualified himself to act in this advantageous manner for the Nation, or will disqualify himself by persevering in his present measures, I see no single person who has sufficient credit to replace Mr. Pitt; perhaps no body of men yet known to the Nation have that weight with the Public\*. But I trust the County

of

\* The Writer in this passage is alluding not to the degree of confidence merited by Mr. Fox, or the Friends of the People, but to the

of York, by adhering with unanimity and firmness to temperate measures, with the accession of some other Bodies who see the danger of extremes, may be able to incline the balance the right way. To act with this view, has been my resolution long; and to hold it out in time, was the motive for publishing what you have seen. I hope I have not wholly miscarried in my design; if I have been able in any degree to recommend moderate

the degree of it which they had then obtained. In the Society, so named, were many gentlemen of high reputation for their abilities, whose patriotic zeal well deserved the esteem of the public; but they were Volunteers in the cause of Reform, who had not yet connected themselves with any considerable portion of the People. They had indeed defined their general principles, and those principles were constitutional and moderate; but they had neither taken from the People a Plan of Reform, nor held forth to them a Plan of their own. And at that time, Mr. Fox had neither explained his views of Reform, nor was he particularly connected with those County-Associations which had before exerted themselves in that cause with efficacy and perseverance. In the eyes of the Public his Rival, from the advantage of his station, and his early efforts in favour of Reform, had long appeared most prominent in the band of Political Reformers. But in 1792 their confidence in Mr. Pitt was greatly shaken by the strong suspicion of a change in his system of Administration; and soon afterwards, by his manifest tergiversation it was for ever overthrown. From that time Mr. Fox has uniformly risen in the estimation of those who are Friends of Liberty on Constitutional Principles, till, at length, he seems to have obtained their confidence in a supreme degree.

But even now, it must be owned, that he has not been able to animate the great body of his Countrymen with his own rational and ardent zeal for Liberty, or not to a sufficient extent. The Patriot Orator has pleaded her cause with eloquence and perseverance, but hitherto without suitable success. That, however, cannot be imputed as blame to him; it is the baneful effect of our wealth and luxury, combined with the long-continued and increasing corruption, which in the mass of the people, and still more perhaps in the superior classes, has nearly extinguished the manly spirit of Independence, and their once-characteristic zeal for Freedom. If the upper classes can be roused to the wonted vigour of their Ancestors, if a great portion of the People, now sunk in supine apathy, can be inspirited to the just support of their Rights,

and

derate terms of Reformation, and to check the spreading of Republican Doctrines, while I defend the character of Dr. Price, and yet have not offended one Friend in Yorkshire whom I love and highly esteem, I shall think myself happy indeed. †

I am, dear Sir,

Very cordially your's,

C. WYVILL.

and another portion can be restrained from the pursuit of unwarrantable Innovations, it can be effected alone by the talents, the moderation, and virtuous consistency of our Great Statesman, assisted by external events. No man, perhaps, has arisen in any age or country more richly gifted with the qualities of the heart and head, more completely stored with the acquirements of learning and experience which could enable him to perform the arduous task, in a corrupt state of the Legislature, and with degenerate manners of the Public, to restore the national spirit of Liberty, and by effecting a radical Reform to become the Saviour of his Country. At such an æra the Romans had their Cato; but a greater than Cato is here. With the fortitude and constancy of the Roman Patriot, Mr. Fox possesses the humaner virtues and the disinterested zeal of a Savile, and joins to them the talents of a Demosthenes. But it is impossible that the sinking Liberty of a Nation can be restored by the utmost efforts of Individual Virtue and Genius, however extraordinary, if unsupported by the Nation itself. If his troops are cowards, the most consummate General will exert his skill and courage in vain to prevent their defeat. If his Fellow-Citizens mentally are already Slaves sunk into abject meanness, base corruption, and a spiritless indifference to the welfare of the Public; the wisest and most inflexible Patriot will toil in vain to preserve their Freedom. If ought can effectually aid his exertions, it must be the corrective power of Adversity at a crisis like the present.

Oct. 20, 1803.

† The Editor had reason to fear, before the date of this letter, as the Reader will have observed, that by the Publication alluded to he had displeased one of his most valued Friends; yet he retained a hope, that the displeasure would be transient, and former confidence might be restored. But time shewed, that though personal good-will remained unaltered, the political friendship was lost, never to be recovered.

LETTER

LETTER XXV.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to WILLIAM  
BURGH, Esq.*

BRIDLINGTON QUAY, *July 16th, 1792.*

My Dear Sir,

I HAVE received both your friendly letters ; and thinking them not only very kind to me personally, but of great importance to the Public Cause, I am unwilling to answer them immediately, especially as I am a good deal hurried this afternoon, and could not possibly bestow upon them that mature consideration which their importance demands. But by Thursday's post you will receive my deliberate, and, I trust, impartial thoughts upon the present posture of our affairs, with my reasons for thinking it expedient that the most material papers published by the New Association in London (the Friends of the People) should not be suppressed, and particularly that which Mr. Bl. has been desired to publish in this week's Chronicle, which I consider as a strong and decisive measure in reprobation of the dangerous conduct of the Constitutional Society. I shall at present, therefore, content myself with assuring you that, considering the re-publication of these letters perfectly harmless, if not beneficial to the Public Cause, I wished they might appear in the York News Paper, and I gave Mr. Blanchard permission to say (in case inquiry were made) that it was at my request the correspondence in question was published ; but I  
certainly

certainly did not mean that he should publish such a declaration, nor shall I take any other step which can tend in any degree to implicate my name with that of the Society, and render me responsible for their measures. From an early period of their existence I declined engaging with this Association, and I have seen no reason to change my opinion in that respect; on the contrary, your letter would have confirmed my resolution, had I been undetermined.\*

With my best wishes to you and your's, I remain,

My dear Sir,

Affectionately your's,

C. WYVILL.

\* No letter of the Editor's of an earlier date than this has been found, in which his resolution is declared not to become a Member of the Society alluded to; if such a letter had been found, it would not have been withheld from the Reader's inspection. The patriotic views, and the moderate principles laid down by the Friends of the People, were highly approved by the Editor; but he declined engaging with them, as he had before declined accepting his nomination as a Member of the Westminster Committee, because he was aware that the same prejudices against the New Society subsisted among some of his Friends in Yorkshire as they had before displayed against the Westminster Committee, when they required and received his pledge, that he would avoid embarking with them. Among the papers of the Friends of the People which were re-published by the Editor in Yorkshire, their correspondence with the Constitutional Society in April and May, 1792, was the most remarkable. His request to the Printer, Mr. Blanchard, at York, that the letters alluded to might appear in his News-paper, gave occasion soon after to some letters between him and Mr. Burgh; of which this, and the following one, form the Editor's share of the Correspondence.—The republished letters in question may be found in the 3d Volume of the Editor's Political Papers, at pages 149 and 154 of the Appendix.

LETTER

## LETTER XXVI.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to WILLIAM  
BURGH, Esq.*

BRIDLINGTON QUAY, *July 18th, 1792.*

My Dear Sir,

WE certainly are agreed in the object to be pursued, and I flatter myself we shall be agreed in the means to be employed. For I presume you think with me, that a time of peace and prosperity like the present, is no otherwise an improper time for correcting great defects and abuses of the Constitution, than as it is the less likely that the people can be made sensible of the necessity of such a measure; and if from having recently felt the fatal effects of the abuses alluded to, and from having been roused by a long discussion of the subject, the People should appear more thoroughly dissatisfied under their Constitutional Grievances, even in a time of peace, than they were before during the pressure of an unjust and calamitous war, it seems evident that an attempt to reform the Legislature of the Country may be made with greater safety at that season than it could during a war with powerful enemies abroad. The time then being considered as not improper, is there any solid objection to be found in the temper of the Nation? I think not. The Proclamation (which, if intended as a measure preparatory to a series of political prosecutions, I think neither right nor politic) has yet had the good effect

effect to render the Loyalty of the Nation unquestionably evident, and nothing but prosecutions on the one hand, and on the other a fixed determination in the Ruling Powers to resist all attempts of Reformation, can give serious importance to Mr. Paine and the Republican Faction. In this disposition of the Nation, it seems to be peculiarly right to endeavour to promote a spirit of temperate Reformation; and it is become of late more than ever necessary, because many of the Addressees, in language which Mr. Burke himself might have dictated, brand those who would reform and those who would subvert the Constitution with the same stigma, as dangerous men and movers of Sedition. I conclude, therefore, that your objection is not more to the temper of the Nation as unfit for the agitation of this question, than to this time as a season of tranquillity; but that you have observed in the conduct of the New Association, or in the character of its Members, what excites your jealousy and disapprobation. I do not mean to assert that their conduct has been uniformly prudent and irreproachable; I think with Mr. Baker that they ought to have insisted that the name of Mr. Cartwright \* should have been

\* Mr. Cartwright is justly celebrated for his ability as a Political Philosopher, for his intrepidity as a Practical Politician, and for the integrity and consistency of his conduct, as an Advocate for Reform on the principle of Universal Suffrage. But when the Friends of the People took less extensive ground for their plan, the Chairman of the Constitutional Society by joining them could but weaken their efforts in favour of moderate Reform: against them the arts of the Minister were principally directed: to discredit them was the object of many of his measures: and therefore what

been withdrawn. But I think it unfair to conclude, from their having imprudently suffered his name to continue on the list, that they are led by him. The letters I wish to be published shew to the contrary; and I have lately seen one of their Members, Mr. Lloyd, who is, I believe, neither a dissenter nor a follower of the Opposition, and by whom I am assured that they have elected, of late, none but persons of a temperate character, and that the Society may be relied on as in their views entirely constitutional, and clearly convinced that they must adhere to temperate measures. It is true, that many of the Society are dissenters, and more are opponents to Mr. Pitt; but if they lend a helping hand to forward a good measure, we are much obliged to them. And we must never forget, that whenever Political Reformation shall be accomplished, it will be by the co-operation of a multitude of persons of many dissimilar characters, agreeing in this one measure, and led to good by perhaps a small minority of

ever could lend plausibility to his charge, "that the views of the New Society were less moderate than their professions to the Public," should have been cautiously avoided: and the name of Mr. Cartwright should have been withdrawn from the List of their Members, or never inserted among them.

It may be remarked, that Mr. Cartwright was a Member of the Meeting of Deputies who met in London in 1780, and that his attendance there was never objected to. Certainly not: they were a Deputed Body; not, like the Friends of the People, a self-formed Meeting. They had not the power to choose or to reject their Associates; and no reason of policy existed then, if they had possessed that power, why this respectable Advocate of Universal Suffrage should have been excluded. The Revolution had not then burst forth in France, and the exaggerated fears of Innovation which disgraced the period of 1792 had not then been excited in England.

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men truly disinterested, and sincerely attached to all the fundamental principles of our Government, Civil and Ecclesiastical. But it ought to be well considered whether the design of this Association, or, at least, the tendency of its measures, may not be to overturn the present administration; and whether they may not succeed in that, without effecting a Reformation of Parliament. To this I answer, that I think it highly probable that some of the Members may be actuated by such unworthy motives, or, at least, that their zeal may in part be imputed to such views. But I think those views wholly chimerical. Without Mr. Pitt, they cannot hope to carry their measures in this reign; and if by his countenancing their measures they should be carried, that could not tend to lower Mr. Pitt in the public esteem, it would make him more popular than ever. For the same reason I consider it as impossible for them to take the measure out of Mr. Pitt's hand; he can negative it, if he pleases; if he consents, it must be because they do not materially vary from his former propositions. But though I think thus of the New Association, and of the tendency of their exertions, I do not mean, as I have already said, to engage myself with them. If I ever come forward again, it will be with the Friends of Reformation in Yorkshire; with them, and particularly with yourself, I should feel myself bound to consult, previously to any County Meeting, on the subject: I have not written any thing (except my late Pamphlet and the Preface to my Collection) upon  
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the subject; I have not published, I believe, a single paragraph in the news papers for many years; when good can be done, I have no objection, with my old Friends, to begin again with equal zeal, but with diminished strength. The toil I formerly endured, I never can endure again. But when it is thought expedient by the generality of our Friends that Yorkshire should come forward, I shall not be found tardy to obey their summons. In the mean-time, if I am not totally mistaken in the preceding reasoning, the publication of such papers as that immediately in question can do no harm whatever. It is doing exactly what was done before, when the pieces of Mr. Cartwright, Mr. G. Sharp, and the Duke of Richmond, were published, and, as it was then thought, with advantage, *generally, not always*, to the cause. In fact, I do believe the plan of the New Society will turn out to be less different from ours than that of the Duke of Richmond, and they have expressly confined it to the improvement of our Representation, and the obtaining more frequent Elections, or, as I understand them, the repeal of the Septennial Bill. I will only add, that I shall be in York in October, and shall be happy to shew you the most material correspondence I have held since the publication of my Pamphlet, which will be found, I believe, perfectly consistent with all I have here said. I am ever, my dear Sir,

Affectionately your's,

C. WYVILL.

NUMBER

## NUMBER II.

## LETTER I.

*From Earl STANHOPE to the Rev. C. WYVILL.*

MANSFIELD-STREET, April 18, 1792.

Dear Sir,

I HAVE just read your spirited and judicious Pamphlet \* with particular pleasure, and have just distributed those you sent me. Every act of your life increases the esteem I have for you. †

Ever most cordially and truly your's,  
STANHOPE.

\* The Defence of Dr. Price, &c.

† This series of letters, addressed by Earl Stanhope to the Editor, is here offered to the Public with the noble Author's consent, granted after he had inspected and compared them with the copies of the corresponding letters of the Editor to his Lordship. Of these one only was thought fit to accompany Earl Stanhope's share of the Correspondence. The rest, by mutual consent, were destroyed, either as being unimportant, or as conveying ideas, from the Editor's misinformation respecting certain facts, which would have misled the Public. But one exception there was to what is here declared. The Editor's answer to his noble Correspondent's letter of the 16th of September, 1792, respecting Mr. Macintosh's commendation of the French mode of Election, was not one of his letters destroyed by mutual consent; for neither had Earl Stanhope preserved the original letter, nor the Editor his copy. This circumstance he much regrets, and now can only endeavour to supply the deficiency by stating his recollection in general, that, in the letter in question, he treated that mode of Election as inapplicable or unfit to be offered here at that time, because the tendency of the measure was rather to diminish than to augment the weight of the Freeholders; and consequently the proposal would too probably alienate that body of men, without whose assistance there could be no rational hope of success to the cause

## LETTER II.

*From Earl STANHOPE to the Rev. C. WYVILL.*

CHEVENING HOUSE, near SEVENOAKS, KENT,  
Sept. 16, 1792.

Dear Mr. Wyvill,

**I**N consequence of what you mention in your last, respecting the idea of calling a Meeting this winter in Yorkshire, upon the subject of Parliamentary Reform, I think it right to tell you frankly my opinion about it, having invariably been a warm friend to that measure. The French Revolution has frightened some weak minds: Mr. Paine's works, others: And the late events in France have intimidated many. However despicable such feelings may be, abstractedly considered, yet, when they are pretty general, they must be treated with some respect. I am clear that no attempt at present for a Parliamentary Reform can produce any good; but, on the contrary, shew weakness in the end. How

cause of moderate Reform.—Whether Earl Stanhope had then formed any design to attempt in this mode to purify our Elections, the Editor knows not. It is certain that no such measure ever was proposed to the Public by his Lordship, and it is probable that he had formed no decided resolution.

The Editor here begs leave to offer his thanks to Earl Stanhope for the kindness of his compliance on this occasion, and also to acknowledge the constant and affectionate friendship with which during the course of their long connection he has honoured him. The friendship of this truly generous Patriot has been experienced by the Editor in every possible instance, and he feels it with gratitude and the sympathy of affection, though hitherto he has been without the ability, and almost without the hope adequately to repay this debt of kindness. But the wish completely to repay it remains, and ever will remain fixed in his breast; and he trusts his Noble Friend will continue to accept the insufficient return.

has Mr. Grey taken it up? I understand he is hostile to Sir George Savile's idea, which you supported, when proposed by Mr. Pitt, of purchasing out the Boroughs. A temperate measure. Mr. Bankes, in the House of Commons; you recollect, took that line. No plan has been brought forwards.

You know that that Bill, without which an addition to the County Representation would do nothing, namely, the Bill for registering votes, which I carried with so much pains, and at an expence of 40 or 50,000l. to the Public (which expence was actually incurred for 100 years) has been repealed by the enemies, and by some false friends of Reform, without having been *even tried*. Something must be substituted for *that* plan. The same cannot be proposed again, nor any thing like it. It was, no doubt, repealed for *that* purpose. The mode of election, by means of choosing Electors, who are themselves to choose the Members, is perhaps the best plan possible. The lower class cannot always be personally acquainted with the fittest men to send to Parliament. But they may know the best yeomen to choose as choosers. And it is well said by Mr. Macintosh\*, that that mode (viz. the French mode of election) is as much superior to a simple Representative Government, as a simple Representative Government

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\* The controversy occasioned by Mr. Burke's Reflections on the French Revolution produced nothing comparable to the *Vindiciæ Gallicæ* of Mr. Macintosh. When the interest of powerful Parties shall be no longer in question, when prejudice and alarm shall have ceased to pervert the judgment of the Public, when truth and

is to a pure Democracy. No bribery, no riots, no expence, and a free and intelligent choice. Your publication and Mr. Mackintosh's, are the best that have appeared for many years. Consult your friends about this idea. And also about the idea of eventually petitioning the King, and also Parliament, *against War*; should any Ministers be mad enough to involve this country in a War against the *Liberties of France*. Pray inform me of the result of your inquiries. I hope we shall keep at peace. But the very thought of a War so impolitic, so rash, and unjust, fills the mind with horror, and the friends of Liberty should endeavour to prevent it.

Dear Sir,

Ever most cordially and sincerely your's,  
STANHOPE.

P. S. My servant in Town has received a parcel from your Publisher, and will send it to me.

### LETTER III.

*From Earl STANHOPE to the Rev. C. WYVILL.*

CHEVENING HOUSE, *October 21, 1792.*

Dear Sir,

**I** HAVE just received yours of the 14th inst. I am happy to hear from you that a War and simplicity of language shall be once more preferred to passionate exaggeration and a profusion of gaudy ornaments blended in a Treatise of Political Science with the extravagance of Arabian Romance, then even the celebrated performance of his Antagonist will sink in comparison with this composition, which defends the principles of Freedom with superior force of argument, and adds to a rich display of political knowledge the beauties of a style at once simple, elegant, and energetic.

*against*

*against the Liberties of France* would be received with such marked disapprobation in your part of the Country. The late signal successes of that Nation will, I trust, prevent it from happening. Other motives will, no doubt, co-operate strongly to prevent it, but let us be *upon the watch*. It gives me the greatest pleasure that my Pamphlet on the Rights of Juries meets with your approbation. With respect to what you say respecting the French mode of voting by means of *electing Electors*\*, depend upon it, that Parliament (if it should be properly brought forward, and at a proper time, which the present certainly is not) would not be found so averse to it as at first you might imagine, if one can judge from what has fallen from different people, who, in other respects, *cannot* be considered as Friends to a Parliamentary Reform. Its obvious advantages have struck some people forceably. It is natural they should. I wish much to know the ideas of the *Friends* of Reform upon the subject. Difference of opinion, upon such points, is always to be expected. But, as to persons in Parliament, I am convinced that there would be found there, far more Friends to *that mode of Election*, than sincere Friends to Parliamentary Reform. I think we should give up neither. The first, however, would be the less difficult to obtain by far. Believe me, with the greatest esteem,

Dear Sir,

Sincerely and truly your's.

\* For the Editor's "Considerations on the Twofold Mode of Election adopted by the French," see the Appendix of this Volume.

P. S. It will be worth your while to turn to page 241, *et sequent*, of Mr. Macintosh's admirable and eloquent *Vindiciæ Gallicæ*, where he speaks upon this subject; beginning with the following words: "It seemed as great an improvement on Representative Government, as Representation itself was on pure Democracy. No extent of territory is too great for a popular Government thus organized," &c.

I have received the copies of your most excellent work (a Defence of Dr. Price, &c.) and consider it as a valuable present to those to whom I have sent it.

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#### LETTER IV.

*From* Earl STANHOPE *to the* Rev. C. WYVILL.

CHEVENING HOUSE, near SEVEN OAKS, KENT,  
December 30, 1792.

Dear Sir,

**M**ANY thanks for your letter of the 27th inst. You would do me a great favour if you would have the goodness to inform me soon what you have lately found to be the opinion of persons of different descriptions, in your County, with respect to a War with France? To me it appears that it would be madness.

I wish you many happy new years, and as many as your upright conduct makes you deserve. With great esteem,

Dear Sir,

Ever cordially your's.

LETTER

## LETTER V.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to Earl STANHOPE.*

BURTON-HALL, Jan. 12. 1793.

My Dear Lord,

**M**Y apprehensions of the fatal consequences of a War have been long known to your Lordship and to the Public. They certainly are not diminished; and I think I may venture to assure you, in case that event should unfortunately take place as the result of the present dispute with France, that the War will be more generally odious than that with America was at its commencement, and will excite much more dangerous discontents in its progress \*. This is my opinion, from having found the measures tending to hostilities reprobated in the strongest terms by many of Mr. Pitt's former most steady and disinterested friends, who consider his being led away by the frenzy of Burke, or the folly and head-long rashness of the Court, as a misfortune that threatens nothing less than absolute ruin to the country. It is possible he may still mean peace, and only endeavours to avail himself of the present fit of wild and

\* The Proclamation against Seditious Writings, &c. held forth the first manifest indication that a change in the system of Mr. Pitt's Administration was about to take place. Yet his language, and that of his personal Friends, continued for several months to express their wish of Peace and their fidelity to the principles of Reform. Hence the embarrassment of those who, without actual proof of the Minister's treachery, had reason to fear his tergiversation. Their doubts were solved by the War with France, and the consequent desertion of the cause of Reform by Mr. Pitt: but though deceived and disappointed by him, they never were his dupes.

enthusiastic loyalty to bring the National Convention to better terms. While this is possible, prudent and public-spirited men will be cautious how they do any thing which may impede the success of any negotiation now carried on perhaps with this view. But if the Minister should rush into a War on Burke's wild idea of preventing a Civil War in England, or on such a futile pretence as that of keeping the Scheldt shut, he would soon find his Administration opposed by his former Friends, and execrated by the Public at large. What events on the Continent would excite a general wish for War, I cannot pretend to conjecture; but a War commenced against the general opinion at present, would exceed whatever we have seen of rash impolicy in the Administration of Lord North; the Minister himself would soon be the sacrifice of public hatred, but where the calamities of the Public would end, no man can foresee.

I have lately passed some days with Mr. Wilberforce at Mr. Duncombe's. Mr. W. deprecates War as much as your Lordship, and is equally desirous of a moderate Reformation; but I do not find him sanguine in his hopes either that the first will be avoided, or the second obtained\*. Against your influence and

\* The Editor conceives himself to have been at liberty to communicate these sentiments of Mr. Wilberforce to Earl Stanhope, and now to publish them, because he had received authority from Mr. Wilberforce to state to a Public Meeting of his Constituents, that he maintained these sentiments respecting Reform. See the Editor's letter to John Anderson, Esq; Jan. 10, 1793, in a subsequent Number, containing correspondence on the subject of an

and his, there is to be placed the Court, the Cabinet, and a vast majority of Peers. I fear the odds is too great.

I am ever, my dear Lord,

Most cordially your's,

C. WYVILL.

## LETTER VI.

*From Earl STANHOPE to the Rev. C. WYVILL.*

CHEVENING HOUSE, near SEVENOAKS, KENT,

Jan. 13, 1792.

Dear Mr. Wyvill,

I HAVE just received your's of the tenth instant, and cannot delay one moment returning you my most hearty thanks for the important information it contains.

Let us wait to see what Ministers do. After that, as you have had the infinite merit to stop one ruinous war, you may be able to stop another, at a proper time.\*

I am ever, my dear Sir,

Most affectionately and cordially your's.

Address to the Throne from a Meeting at Hawes in Yorkshire, held on the 24th of December, 1792. Respecting Peace also his sentiments were already known by his speeches in Parliament, and it is impossible to suppose that Mr. W. affected secrecy on that subject.

\* Soon after the date of this letter by Earl Stanhope, the Editor's letter to Mr. Pitt was written, stating some of the objections to the impending War with France which to him appeared most forcible. It was an act of painful duty thus to avail himself of his still-subsisting connection with the Minister-Advocate of Reform, to prevent a measure so inimical to Liberty, if aught he could represent possibly could have that weight; but it was an act of duty performed with little hope of success. The silence of Mr. Pitt in a short time confirmed his apprehensions of a determined change in his system of policy, and convinced him that the new counsels and daring character of the Minister would expose the Constitution to the greatest hazard.

NUMBER

NUMBER III.

*Containing the EDITOR'S Correspondence with  
CAPEL LOFFT, Esq; in the years 1792 and  
1793.*

LETTER I.

*From CAPEL LOFFT\*, Esq; to the Rev. C.  
WYVILL.*

TROSTON-HALL, near BURY, SUFFOLK,  
22d April, 1792.

Sir;

**B**Y favour of our friend Mr. Lloyd I last night received the Tract with which your obliging attention has honoured me.

I have read it with very great and almost with unmixed satisfaction. In a long letter (a much longer than even this) with which I troubled you about seven years ago, when the last public efforts were making for a Reform in the Election and Duration of Parliaments, I expressed my sentiments pretty much in detail; and so far as I have recollected, they are not materially altered since. I continue to think the exercise of the Universal Right of Suffrage the most simple, the most probably effective measure, the most in the spirit of the Constitution, the most agreeable to social Right, perfectly applicable to our pre-

\* From Philanthropy a Friend to Freedom and the widest extension of the Constitutional Rights of the People; from probity and the elevation of his mind, an Enemy to the base principle of governing by Corruption; such, as a public man, is the character of the worthy Writer of this letter; which proves, that he also knew how to temper the ardour of his zeal with candour, moderation, and the most conciliatory prudence,

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sent circumstances, and with suitable Registry, and voting by Districts, at least as exempt as any other from tumult, perplexity, or abuse. I continue to think Annual (strictly speaking Sessional Parliaments) but at least Biennial, preferable to Triennial; but I would go as far as I could, consistently with the principles I hold, in any modified Reform in which the Friends of Parliamentary Reformation could unite.

With a view to this, all condemnation on either side of a more or less extensive system, seems necessary to be avoided. But if a limited system unites the greatest number of the active Friends of Reform at present, and if Committees should be revived, and a specific plan on a report of those Committees to the General Meetings which may depute them should be agreed, my wish is, that it may neither censure any progressive Reform which others may think expedient, nor include any accumulating premium to such Boroughs as shall be the last to surrender their partial franchises (the title is too honourable for interests so held and so employed) to the Public. If it is thought a sum ought to be given for the ademption of them, that such sum be fixed, and independent of their readiness or backwardness; at least as to the amount, if not as to the immediate necessity of the surrender. If so much is brought forward, without reprobating more, or attempting to set barriers to the progressive perfectibility of the Constitution, it shall have from me all the concurrence which a very retired, disconnected

disconnected Individual can give, who has too constantly opposed all Parties when he thought them acting prejudicially to the Public, to have interest or influence, but what simple truth and public good may, in certain circumstances and seasons, attach to the endeavours of those who wish to promote them in the midst of corruption and abuses, seemingly too rooted, in the midst of the league of the enemies and disunion of the Friends of Freedom.

That season and those circumstances appear now to exist, and I hope favourably for Religious as well as Civil Freedom\*. I cordially unite in your sentiments and wishes for such Reform in the Liturgy as shall render it not the vehicle of particular opinions, but the expression (which in general it is so well fitted to become) of Christian piety and charity; in which all who believe the truth of Christianity, and do not wish their particular dogmas to encroach on the charity, freedom, and united affection of public worship, could join. You will readily be convinced how warmly I have felt your clear, animated, generous Defence

\* Appearances at that time might well revive these hopes; but they were soon blasted by a series of adverse events in Parliament, by the Royal Proclamation against Sedition, and the consequent alarm of the Public. From the year of 1792, the delusion seems continually to have spread, till at last it gained complete possession of the national mind. To this state of insatiation and servility it was degraded chiefly by the effects of the first War with the French Republic; but to the second it may owe its recovery from it. As in the character of Individuals, so in that of Nations, there are seasons of progressive improvement, and seasons in which a retrograde motion is observable, and again a fresh advance to higher improvement. To each the experience of Ill, as the consequence of their misconduct, affords the necessary motive to self-correction, and to rectify what has been unwisely done.

of Dr. Price, whom it has been long my pride to consider personally as my friend, and the purity, ingenuous benevolence, calm intrepidity, disinterested prudence of whose character (cautious for the community, regardless of himself) has fixed his memory in my esteem and veneration: I think all reflecting men must agree that, circumstanced as we are, the Constitution must be repaired or fall; and I do not think of the shock and horror which must attend its fall, by whatever means produced, with such unconcern as to be willing that my Country should risque them for the possibility of a Constitution emerging from its ruins, which in my opinion would be better. I can perceive that no Constitution is good for any People while the great majority cannot think it so; that no Nation can be compelled to be free upon the system of others in opposition to their own sentiments, habits, and feelings; and I can look forward to such a measure of Political Perfection in the Constitutional Fabric of this Country by a general (if not at once universal) and equalized Representation in short Parliaments as would render all other imperfections of little moment, provided Religious Freedom, and the unfettered, unstigmatized exercise of the Rights of Conscience kept pace, as of course they would, with such a melioration in the Civil System. The Clergy, being men, have a right to exercise their functions, and a duty to maintain the office and character of Citizens, in whatever post, Legislative or Executive, the Constitution of their Country calls forth

forth their exertions: for this reason, though the translatability of Bishops be, as I apprehend, an abuse in the Ecclesiastical, and a dangerous inconvenience in the Civil Frame, I am far from a wish that the Clergy should be incapacitated from sitting in Parliament: and, with much Reform, it seems more expedient they should remain where they are, than to make them a part of the other House; and from the one or other I think they ought not to be excluded. In this respect I prefer the French to the American Constitution; at least, as the American stood lately.

Excuse this hasty and long letter; hasty, because I would not forego the earliest moment; and long, in proportion to the substance it contains, because several pressing engagements would not suffer me to condense it.

I remain, with true respect and esteem,

Sir,

Your obliged and obedient servant,  
CAPEL LOFFT.

## LETTER II.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to CAPEL  
LOFFT, Esq.*

BURTON-HALL, May 18th, 1792.

Sir,

**I** RECEIVED the honour of your letter of the 22d of April, and should have returned an immediate acknowledgment of the pleasure it gave me, to find my late publication in Defence of Dr. Price and the Reformers of England,

land, was fortunate enough to meet your general approbation, if I had not wished to consider well the more important part of your letter, in which with great candour and frankness you have mentioned on what grounds you could meet and co-operate with the Yorkshire Gentlemen, in support of the common cause of Parliamentary Reformation. I thought of delaying my answer at first for a few posts; but the formation of a new Society in London to promote that Reformation, the notice given by Mr. Grey in the House of Commons, that he meant to make a motion upon that subject next winter, Mr. Pitt's immediate declaration of hostility to the intended motion, with his subsequent conduct on the late motion by Mr. Fox against the persecuting Statutes of William the Third, were events of so much importance to the cause of Liberty, and some of them so unlooked for, that on that account I have delayed writing to you much longer than my first intention.

I believe, Sir, we are agreed in thinking that in our present circumstances there is some danger of the Country running into a state of great confusion; and that it behoves wise and moderate men, who are friendly to Liberty, to exert themselves as much as possible in concert to prevent that fatal misfortune, and yet to avail themselves of this fermentation in the public mind to obtain some substantial improvement in the Constitution. I think the strange conduct of Mr. Pitt much increases the danger and the difficulty too of obtaining any concessions for the People. In Yorkshire,  
were

were any attempt to be made, at a County Meeting, to go beyond the ground formerly occupied by our Freeholders, the friends of Mr. Pitt would have a fair pretence for withdrawing their support, and any application to Parliament which came with diminished numbers, would greatly injure the cause. In my opinion, therefore, it will be imprudent here to propose (almost) any thing more than what was before proposed and supported with great unanimity. But if the County of Suffolk could be engaged to petition Parliament for the extinction of 50 of the worst of the Boroughs, and the addition of 100 Members to the Counties, &c. together with the repeal of the Septennial Bill, that would form a sufficient bond with Yorkshire, although there should chance to be some variation respecting other subjects; but this not to extend to the mode of effecting the extinction of the 50 Boroughs by voluntary sale, for that is considered here as the only means to accomplish the change desired quietly; and though the obnoxious Boroughs cannot pretend the least right to such a compensation, it would surely be spending one of our millions of public money well thus to obtain a very substantial improvement in our Representation, without risque; and though it would be a slow operation, and might be twenty years in arriving at the full accomplishment of its object, yet some Boroughs would doubtless accept the offer immediately; some Counties or unrepresented places would immediately gain their share of the Representation, and the rest would then,

I think,

I think, be so desirous of obtaining their's, that no subsequent attempt to deprive them of it could succeed. Had this scheme been adopted in 1785, it is probable that half the number of Boroughs by this time might have been disfranchised, and fifty new Members sitting at this time in the House of Commons for Marybone, Birmingham, Manchester, &c. If such a general improvement as this were to be now accepted by Parliament, I think it would be right to allow due time for the Country to experience whether, with the other measure of a repeal of the Septennial Bill, it was sufficient to remove all just complaint. But I see no reason why that should create any difficulty. Mr. Pitt treated his plan, if adopted by Parliament, as a measure that ought to be final. The County of York declared they would accept the measure with high approbation. But other Bodies need not to vote the measure final, with Mr. Pitt, nor even declare high approbation of it with the County of York. That seems unnecessary; though it would probably have a good effect, if as many Counties, &c. as petitioned, would also intimate their intention to give a reasonable trial of the new-amended system before they came forward with any fresh demands respecting the general distribution of the right of Representation to the Counties, Cities, and Towns. That a greater extension of the right of Suffrage than Mr. Pitt proposed would be very desirable, I readily allow. And thinking the defect of Mr. Pitt's plan lay chiefly here, I wished to meet your ideas and  
those

those of other Gentlemen, by throwing out in general terms that the right of Suffrage should be extended to Householders of a certain class; under the latitude of which description an extension not greatly short of Universal Suffrage might be obtained.

I will only add at present, that if these propositions were approved by the People, an application suitable to them would increase the difficulty Mr. Pitt would feel to oppose; or, if he did oppose, would render it more difficult for him to excuse his conduct. This, I think, renders it even more expedient than it was before to adhere to the general outline *nearly*, which was drawn in 1785.

I am, Sir, with great and sincere respect,

Your most obedient servant,

C. WYVILL.

### LETTER III.

*From CAPEL LOFFT, Esq; to the Rev.*

C. WYVILL.

Dear Sir,

I waited in hope of answering more particularly your obliging letter of the 18th of May; but I am sorry to say there is no hope of a County Meeting at this time in Suffolk, after all the conference and correspondence that could be had with the best friends of the cause; not even for the simple measure in which I thought we were most likely to act with unanimity and effect, the repeal of the

the

the Septennial Act. I am very much of your sentiment that from a backwardness to even the most moderate Reform, measures not tranquil in the conduct, nor easy to be appreciated in their tendency and result, are but too likely to arise.

I could not even obtain a letter to be agreed on, or so much as the plan of one to be formed to the new Association, (entitled the Friends of the People) from whom, according to appearances and every source of presumptive proof, at least nothing violent is to be apprehended.

I remain with true esteem,

Dear Sir,

Your obliged friend,

CAPEL LOFFT.

7th June, 1792.

#### LETTER IV.

From CAPEL LOFFT, Esq; to the Rev.

C. WYVILL.

December 24, 1792.

Dear Sir,

IN the midst of an alarm in which I could not justify myself to my Country and my conscience if I were to concur, as I do not feel it from any of the suggested causes in Proclamations, Addresses, and unexampled Associations of animosity and disunion, I take leave to propose to you a few very short and simple questions.

Was there at any season a time in which a just and adequate Reform in the Representa-

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tion

tion was more necessary, permanently to unite the minds of the great majority of the People in adherence to the Constitution?

Would the Friends of Freedom with whom you are connected be disposed to go, if not so far as Universal Suffrage, which I have long thought, and still think, the safe and most practicable extent, at least so far as Mr. Flood's proposition, just before his death, of extending the exercise of the Right of Suffrage to all Householders?

Less than this I firmly believe could not be proposed with effect.

With respect to the duration, if not to Annual, which seems to me the simplest and most constitutional, would the Friends of the Constitution in Yorkshire go so far as a modification of Triennial by exclusion of a third by ballot, if this should be found acceptable to the Public mind?

This Reform, and the recognition of the French Republic immediately, strike me to be essential to the honour and interests of the Nation abroad, and to the preservation of the Constitution at home, from perhaps a long and dreadful decline, or immediate ruin. If the times are thought dangerous, the danger, in proportion as it is felt or apprehended, cries aloud for the remedy.

I do not say the immediate recognition of the Republic of France would save the unhappy person for whom so much unavailing, and even irritating solicitude has been expressed; but I say it would be probably the best for him, and certainly for the two Nations,

tions, and the peace and happiness of Europe, and that an immediate substantial Reform in the Representation, measured by the wish of the People, appears requisite to the very existence of the Constitution.

I remain, with true esteem,

Dear Sir,

Your obliged friend,

CAPEL LOFFT.

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LETTER V.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to CAPEL LOFFT, Esq.*

BURTON-HALL, Dec. 29<sup>th</sup>, 1792.

My dear Sir,

**I**N answer to your questions respecting the measures to be pursued at this crisis by the Friends of Political Reformation, I will first briefly state my own sentiments, and then what I conjecture may be the sentiments at present of those with whom I am connected in Yorkshire; or what probably will be their sentiments, if matters are not spoiled by any mismanagement in this country, and precipitately hurrying the business forward before they are ready to move.

I perfectly agree with you in thinking a Reformation of Parliament is more than ever necessary. It was before highly desirable for the good it would produce; it is now most ardently to be wished and promoted, for the additional reason, that the greatest evils, now visibly impending over us, can only thus be averted.

With respect to the extension of the Right of Suffrage, I think it ought to go to all Householders not subsisting upon charity. In the Defence of Price I expressed myself with caution, because caution was here absolutely necessary, but with latitude sufficient to admit that idea in its full extent, yet applicable to the terms intended by Mr. Pitt, and approved in Yorkshire.

With respect to the duration of Parliament, I certainly should prefer Annual to Triennial Elections. But if Triennial Elections should be the general wish, the modification proposed (*viz.* the exclusion of a third part of the Members by rotation annually) seems liable to some material objections. According to this regulation, the People would be limited in their choice, the ablest men, the men most confided in, would necessarily be excluded one year in three. At a crisis like the present, it would be fatal to the cause of Popular Rights, if such men as Mr. Fox, Sheridan, Grey, &c. were excluded, even if Mr. Pitt really is disposed to support those Rights as may yet be the truth. It would also introduce a new principle in the Constitution, and for all those reasons I should hesitate to support it.

With respect to the sentiments of the Yorkshire Gentlemen, I must be understood to speak with great diffidence; though I think I may venture to assure you, that in general they are not greatly different from those I have stated to be my own on the subject of extending the Right of Suffrage; or, at least, that in the course of a renewed struggle, they might

might probably come up to the terms you approve. Triennial Elections they would adhere to, I believe; a Rotation, I conceive, they would not approve.

In cases of this sort, future resolutions must be regulated by future events; in every situation of the Public, and in whatever post of toil or danger, (from which the most just and regular conduct cannot always shelter us) it will be our duty to do for the Public what appears best at that time. I, for one, shall profess, that in the present temper of the Nation, I wish to avoid offering any principle or practice which is unknown to the Constitution, and to confine the Plan of Reform to the measures proposed by Mr. Pitt, improved by the adoption of Mr. Flood's principles, (or nearly so) with the repeal of the Septennial Bill. On this ground, success, I think, would be certain, and the danger of convulsion all avoided.

I am, dear Sir,

With great regard,

Very cordially your's,

C. WYVILL.

P. S. It would not be difficult to suggest some regulations by which the operation of Mr. Pitt's Plan of Reform would be rendered more speedy and more impartial.

## LETTER VI.

From CAPEL LOFFT, Esq; to the Rev. C.  
WYVILL.

Jan. 2, 1793.

Dear Sir,

**I** SHOULD not have troubled you with so immediate an answer to the second of your two obliging letters, if I did not think it a point of immediate urgency, and that if measures temperately, but clearly tending to an effectual Reform, be not instantly undertaken, if it be postponed for more quiet times, the means of attempting to secure quiet will act in direct contrariety to their end, and the ruin of the Constitution be certain and irretrievable.

I am glad to hear your sentiments, and your hope that they may pretty nearly agree with those of the Friends in general of Freedom and the Constitution in Yorkshire, with respect to the extending the exercise of the Right of Suffrage, at least to Householders.

And I hope this is to be understood as your statement, not only where Boroughs may be enlarged, or large Towns admitted to the exercise of Suffrage which are hitherto excluded, but also with respect to County Elections. I mean, that wherever there is an Householder who has otherwise no vote, that he be included as a Voter for the County or principal District where resident.

I cannot speak favourably of the dispositions in this County at present to Reform in the Representation. Example might re-animate their attention.

With

With respect to the modification of Triennial Parliaments, I have never been without my own doubts and difficulties with regard to it. I only proposed it, as thinking if Annual Parliaments should not happen to unite a sufficient degree of concurrence in their favour, that Triennial were too long without some modification, and I have not been able to think of any less exceptionable or better, on the whole, than that which I mentioned. If Annual Parliaments were adopted, they would much better satisfy my mind.

With respect to the original Constitution, or general principles, it is true the modification that I proposed does not rest on the former, and but imperfectly satisfies the latter. But you will agree that Triennial Parliaments are no part of the original Constitution.

I am sorry that the Paper, No. 1, of your first letter, was not adopted, as I think it would have been materially serviceable to the cause of Reform.\*

I remain, dear Sir,

With true esteem,

Your obliged friend, &c.

CAPEL LOFFT.

It is very happy that in Yorkshire there should be Householders whose necessity can be relieved without forcing them from their habitations. In Suffolk an Householder ceases

\* The Paper here alluded to was "A Declaration proposed by the Editor to a Public Meeting at Hawes, in the North-Riding of Yorkshire, on the 24th of December, 1792;" for which see the Preliminary Papers at the beginning of this Volume.

to be such, of course, and almost without exception, if he once receives alms: he goes into the Workhouse for life. \*

## LETTER VII.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to CAPEL LOFFT, Esq.*

BURTON-HALL, Jan. 6, 1793.

My Dear Sir,

I HAVE lately had the pleasure to meet Mr. Wilberforce at Mr. Duncombe's. I spent two days with them in conversation on the present state of affairs, the prospect of Parliamentary Reform, and the measures which it may be expedient for the People to propose. On all these subjects their sentiments coincided with mine entirely; or, at least, so nearly, that it would not be easy to mark the difference. I did not, however, understand that Government is at present disposed to make any concessions. It seems to be nearly the unanimous opinion of the Cabinet to avoid reforming Parliament, if it be possible to avoid it. The only exception, I believe, is to be found, not in Earl Camden, not in the

\* Upon an inspection of the House of Industry at Tallingston in Suffolk, many years ago, the Editor was struck with the apparently comfortable situation of the poor inhabitants. They were decently clothed; the house they dwelt in was airy; their rooms were spacious; their beds and bedding were clean and warm; and their provisions were plentiful and of the best quality. What then, it may be asked, was wanting to make them happy? Liberty, and a Home; without which no human creature can enjoy the comforts he is intitled to, however amply, in other respects, he may be furnished with the means of enjoyment.

Duke

Duke of Richmond, but in Mr. Pitt; but even he, I do not conceive, is disposed actively to promote the measures which we think so necessary for the preservation of the Constitution. I do entirely concur, therefore, in your sentiments respecting the necessity of pressing the business forward during the existence of the present fermentation; but, at the same time, I think the Society of the Friends of the People in London have done wisely in forbearing to agitate the great question in Parliament till the fanatical zeal of inconsiderate loyalty has evaporated in addresses and declarations. And for a similar reason it will be prudent not to attempt to bring Popular Meetings to petition for redress of grievances even in those places where the sentiments of the People are most favourable to Reform. Till London and the great Counties are ready to co-operate, it would at present be ruinous to the cause to call a County Meeting in Yorkshire to petition for a Parliamentary Reform. Some external impulse is wanting here, and I may add throughout England in general, to give motion to the popular mind; and it is not to be doubted, if the state of Scotland and Ireland be considered, and also, the various circumstances of a most embarrassing nature respecting France and Holland, that a sufficient impulse from without will operate on the Public (it will be fortunate if it prove not much more than sufficient) to produce the most general applications in a regular way to effect the necessary Reform. I have little room left, but that little is enough for the answer you wish to have

have respecting the extent to which it is probable that the Friends of Freedom in Yorkshire will be willing to adopt Mr. Flood's principle of giving the Right of Suffrage to Householders not being Paupers; I think it ought to take place in Counties as well as in large Towns; I mean to support the adoption of that principle in Yorkshire when the proper opportunity shall arrive, and hope it may be carried to that extent, if a County Meeting should be called at a proper time; but so much will depend on future contingencies, that I can by no means venture to speak with any degree of confidence on the Resolutions of this County at any Meeting now held only in distant contemplation. \*

I am, dear Sir, cordially your's,  
C. WYVILL.

\* The conduct of Mr. Pitt for several years before the Revolutionary War with France had excited suspicions of his versatility, which to the Advocates of the People were perplexing in the extreme. For his professions were still continued in the language, seemingly, of truth and consistency; the appearance of fidelity was still preserved, and no indubitable symptom of change in the general plan of his Administration was observed, till the Proclamation against Sedition was issued in 1792. Even after that first indication of an approaching change of system, assurances of his attachment to the Cause of Reform were received; and though hope was continually diminishing, it was not absolutely extinct. There was at least a possibility, that he would not finally desert the principles of Liberty, and the cause of Moderate Reform; and while that possibility existed, prudence and their duty to the Public forbade the Agents of the People to divulge their suspicions. But soon after the date of this letter, passionate counsels prevailed completely both in the Parliament and in the Cabinet; the War with France was commenced, and Mr. Pitt formed his new friendship with Mr. Burke and the Anti-Reforming Nobles. From that time it was evident that he had renounced the principles of his youth, to which he owed his popularity and power, and deserted that system of Constitutional Improvement to which his fidelity had been pledged, and to accomplish which ought to have been the object of his political

## LETTER VIII.

*From CAPEL LOFFT, Esq; to the Rev.**C. WYVILL.*

13th Feb. 1793.

Dear Sir,

**I**TROUBLE you with a letter, requesting your sentiments whether there is any probability that any considerable portion of the great Interests in Yorkshire, either Landed, Manufacturing, or Commercial, would at this time express their wish for avoiding War with France.

If it be said it is too late, as France has declared War, I confess it seems that this is no insurmountable objection. France would not have declared War, but from circumstances which could not have existed if there had been any mode of discussion with the Provisional Executive Council; or if, perhaps, the dismissal of Mr. Chauvelin and other circumstances had not been so exceedingly irritating, hostile, and even contumelious on the part of the Government of this Country.

Ministry may, perhaps, by this see their error in thus urging hostilities, and some part of the extent of its fatal tendency. If the People, or any considerable proportion, whe-

political life. His pledge was forfeited, his credit was irrecoverably lost, and candour itself could only now expect that the succeeding part of his Administration would be marked by his determined hostility to the Rights of the People. The breach of that connection, which had long united Mr. Pitt and his earliest Friends, now took place with the utmost propriety; they abandoned him when it was become indisputable that he had abandoned the Cause of the People.

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ther of the Landed or Commercial Interests (the latter will be most immediately affected) were now to express their wishes that means might be taken to put the differences in a train of regular discussion, the War might probably even yet not proceed. If it does proceed, a few days must too probably involve us in it inextricably; and I confess I can see no other end of it but the ruin of the Trade, Commerce, and Constitution of Britain, after unspeakable intermediate calamities suffered and inflicted, and an uncertainty in what state or disposition the Nation will be left after the events consequent on such a shock.

I can see no principle of internal or general policy, nothing in the Law of Nations and Nature, which requires or will justify the War. I consider it as bringing with it extreme evils of which no preceding experience can give us an idea. With these sentiments I can do no other than I have been endeavouring for some time, urge on those who are more extensively connected the necessity of all the efforts which reason, love of their country, and philanthropy can inspire, to avert it.

I have received, very unexpectedly, a letter by the post, from Paris, dated the 7th of this month, when that City was in a state of perfect tranquility, and twenty millions had been subscribed in a few days, about 800,000l. sterling, in the equipment of light vessels.

I remain, with due esteem,

Dear Sir,

Your obliged friend,

CAPEL LOFFT.

I do

I do not think our danger turns on Invasion, or no Invasion, or on the events of the War; but on its nature and necessary consequences, be its events what they may.

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## LETTER IX.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to CAPEL LOFFT, Esq.*

BURTON-HALL, Feb. 28th, 1793.

My Dear Sir,

**I** HAVE been particularly hurried with business since I received your letter of the 13th of February, or I should have answered it immediately. On the 9th of this month I wrote to Mr. Pitt a letter, in which I stated to him my objections to the War, and also to some other parts of his conduct for the last ten months, in a manner corresponding, I believe, pretty exactly with your sentiments. This piece for some little time I did not determine to publish; but it is now coming out, I fear, in a state far less accurate than I could wish it; but I chose rather to expose myself to critical animadversions than to lose this opportunity to throw out my protest against the War, and to contribute in any degree, however small, to put a stop to the most fatal measures which have been pursued since the Revolution in 1688. After having said this, I make no doubt you will think it is not without reason I am for postponing any attempt in this County to hold a Meeting in opposition to the

the present measures of Government. We are not yet ripe for such a measure; and indeed, I think those who have before been active in promoting Popular Meetings and the cause of Peace and Reformation, should be cautious of running before the sense of their countrymen, and rather endeavour that they may themselves be called upon to come forward, than press the country to it, when it would be either premature and hurtful to the Cause, or at least when their efforts would be attended with much greater difficulties than would be found in a more sanguine temper of the Country.

I hope Mr. Johnson will have sent you a copy of a letter to Mr. Pitt very soon after you will have received this, and another to my good friend Mr. Lloyd, to whom I beg my compliments.

I am, my dear Sir,

Your very sincere friend;

C. WYVILL.

NUMBER

NUMBER IV.

*Containing the EDITOR'S Correspondence with  
several Yorkshire Gentlemen, respecting  
Meetings to address the THRONE, in 1792.*

LETTER I.

*From* WM. CHAYTOR, Esq; Col. TURNER  
STRAUBENZEE, THOMAS MAUDE, Esq;  
*and the* Rev. T. W. MORLEY, *to the* Rev.  
C. WYVILL.

SPENITHWADE, Dec. 13th, 1792.

Sir,

WE have sent you, as a Magistrate acting  
for this District, the inclosed Requisition,  
for Meetings of the Inhabitants of the  
Wapontake of Hang-West, for your appro-  
bation and concurrence, thinking that at this  
time every good and peaceful subject should  
take the first opportunity of declaring his loy-  
alty and attachment to the Constitution, as  
well as of expressing his disapprobation of all  
Seditious Publications and Associations, tend-  
ing to disturb the tranquility of the Country;  
and though we are happy, as you also must  
be, in not having had opportunity of remark-  
ing any extensive circulation of such Publica-  
tions, or existence of such Associations in this  
District, we still hope it may have a good  
effect in strengthening the confidence of Go-  
vernment to know that fact, as well as damp  
the

the spirits of those whose objects are evidently to create a general dissatisfaction to the Laws and Government of the Country. We are,

Sir,

Your most obedient humble servants,

WILLIAM CHAYTOR,  
TURNER STRAUBENZEE,  
THO. MAUDE,  
T. W. MORLEY.

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LETTER II.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to Wm. CHAYTOR, Esq; Col. TURNER STRAUBENZEE, THOMAS MAUDE, Esq; and the Rev. T. W. MORLEY.*

BURTON-HALL, Dec. 19th, 1792.

Gentlemen,

**I** HAVE been favoured with your letter, dated at Spenithorne this day, and inclosing a notice that "Meetings of the Magistrates, Gentlemen, Clergy, Freeholders, and Inhabitants of the Wapontake of Hang-West, in the North-Riding of the County of York, will be held at Middleham, on Monday the 17th instant, and. at Leyburn, Askrigg, and Hawes, on the next market-days respectively, in order to express their loyalty to the King, and their attachment to the Constitution, as well as their disapprobation of all Seditious Publications and Affociations for the purpose of disturbing the tranquility of this Country."

Plausible as this Requisition may appear, I have no hesitation to declare my opinion to be,

be, that Meetings for the purpose here stated, exclusive of every conciliatory view to promote a just and timely redress of grievances, are not wisely calculated to secure the tranquility of the Country. The grievances which are here alluded to, and which have been complained of by men who can by no means be justly classed with Republicans, Levellers, and other Enemies of our Constitution, are chiefly these, viz. the abuses of our Parliamentary Representation, and the heavy load of taxes which bears so peculiarly hard upon the Poor. These complaints appear to me to be well founded and of great weight; and I think no measure so likely to allay the present discontents of the Country as an early intimation on the part of Ministers, that as far as it may depend on Government, satisfaction shall be given *in this Session* to the People, by a substantial but moderate Reform of Parliament; and a reduction or total abolition of some of those taxes which are most oppressive to the inferior classes of the Community. Coupled with a respectful Petition to Parliament for the redress of grievances, or with a decent representation to the Public that some correction of abuses, which Ministers themselves acknowledge to exist, is humbly hoped for, your Requisition for the intended Meetings would appear unexceptionably proper, and likely to produce the best effects. I should be happy to promote these joint measures at any General Meeting of the County, or of this District with which I am particularly connected; but I must explicitly declare to you that I shall not

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attend

attend any Meeting, at this time, for those purposes alone which are specified in your Requisition. I am, Gentlemen,

Your most obedient, humble servant,

C. WYVILL.

### LETTER III.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to Col. TURNER  
STRAUBENZEE.*

BURTON-HALL, Dec. 20th, 1792.

Sir,

**I** TAKE the liberty to trouble you with the inclosed corrected copy of my answer to your Requisition; the correction made is merely a verbal one; in a single sentence the expression is altered by it a little, and is thus rendered more exact; but the sense remains the same; and in this shape I mean to abide by it, as proposing what appears in my judgment the proper means for preserving permanent tranquility in the Country. I request you will have the goodness to communicate my corrected answer to Mr. Chaytor and the other Gentlemen who signed the Requisition, and at the same time to assure them that if any attack upon property in this neighbourhood should be made, or seriously menaced, or any breach of the laws should be committed by violent men, under any pretence of effecting a redress of grievances, or changing our happy Constitution by King, Lords, and Commons, I shall be ready

to

to unite with you, and them, and all friends of good order, to support the Laws of our Country, to maintain Property, and to defend the Principles of the Constitution.

I am, Sir, your most obedient servant,

C. WYVILL.

#### LETTER IV.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to H. DUNCOMBE, Esq. †*

HAWES, Dec. 24th, 1792.

My Dear Sir,

I HAVE the satisfaction to inform you that at a Meeting of the Gentlemen, Clergy, Freeholders, and Inhabitants of this town and neighbourhood, held here this day, resolutions have been passed, strongly expressing their loyalty to the King, their attachment to the Constitution, and their firm resolution to defend Property, and to support the Laws of their Country against every attack of deluded Individuals, under any pretence of effecting by violent means a redress of grievances, or changing the form of our excellent Government by King, Lords, and Commons.

The Meeting has not thought it advisable at this moment to intermix with these professions of loyalty, any mention of grievances in their Representation in Parliament, and the heavy load of taxes which still bears peculiarly hard upon persons of poor circumstances in this Country; but I have their authority to inform you that they sincerely wish some

† A similar letter was sent to Wm. Wilberforce, Esq.

prudent concessions in both these respects may be made by Government in this Session, or as soon as the unavoidable exigencies of the State will permit, which they consider as the most likely means to re-establish general harmony and content in the Country.

I am, my dear Sir, with great regard,  
most sincerely your's,

C. WYVILL.\*

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LETTER V.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to H. DUNCOMBE, Esq.*

BURTON-HALL, Dec. 26, 1792.

My Dear Sir,

**T**O the official letter and the resolutions which you will receive inclosed under the same cover with this, I think it necessary to add, for your information, and for Mr. Pitt's also, if you should be pleased to communicate to him, that the mild and conciliatory measures which the Meeting of Hawes has respectfully hinted at in their letter of the 24th inst. and through you and Mr. Wilberforce wish to recommend to him with all possible deference, and in the manner least likely, in the present moment, to give offence, was approved by several principal Gentlemen of this neighbourhood, particularly Mr. Chaytor, Colonel Straubenzee, and Mr. Morley, who had not before supported any measures tend-

\* The Editor was Chairman of the Meeting alluded to.

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ing to promote the Reformation of Parliament, or, at least, I never heard they did! And I now think I may safely assure you that the sentiments of this extensive District are nearly unanimous in favour of a moderate Parliamentary Reform.†

I am ever, my dear Sir,

With the greatest regard,

Most faithfully yours,

C. WYVILL.

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LETTER VI.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to JOHN ANDERSON Esq.*

My Dear Sir,

I HAVE the pleasure to assure you, that in the course of my late visit to Copgrove, I found Mr. Duncombe and Mr. Wilberforce perfectly agreed with the Meeting at Hawes, that some prudent concessions on the part of Government, respecting the Representation of the People, and the Taxes which bear peculiarly upon the Poor, would be the most likely means to allay the discontents of the Country, and secure lasting peace and tranquility. But I did not understand it to be their opinion that the measures alluded to, however desirable they may be, are in any degree probable, unless on the one hand a Foreign War should be avoided, and on the other hand, a more earnest and general desire to recover their lost Rights and Privileges, by every legal exertion in their

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power,

† A similar letter was sent to Wm. Wilberforce, Esq.

power, should be manifested by the People.  
With our joint compliments and good wishes,  
I remain, my dear Sir,

Affectionately your's,  
C. WYVILL.\*

BURTON-HALL, Jan. 10, 1793.

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### LETTER VII.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to SAMUEL SHORE,*  
Esq.

BURTON-HALL, Dec. 17th, 1792.

My Dear Sir,

I DISLIKE the proceedings of Government, for the last six or eight months, very much; but I still think it possible that Mr. Pitt may see the necessity of coming forward with a conciliatory Plan of Reform, &c. I have had much correspondence lately with Mr. Wilberforce upon this subject, who agrees with me that Mr. Pitt ought to take this step, and that he ought to lower Taxes and avoid a War. I am to have his more complete answer soon, and if it should then appear that Mr. Pitt is determined to grant no Reform, and, instead of lessening Taxes, to rush into a War with France, my confidence in him will be wholly gone. In consideration of the pro-

\* A duplicate of this letter was sent to several other Gentlemen who had attended the Meeting at Hawes, as containing the answer which the two County Members, Mr. H. Duncombe and Mr. Wilberforce had authorized the Editor to return to that letter of the 24th of December, 1792, which he had been directed by the Meeting to address to them.

bability of these events, I refused, on the 15th of this month, to attend Meetings in this Division for the purpose of addressing the Throne, or declaring Loyalty, &c. My reasons were given at some length with my usual plainness. The grounds of objection which I have taken are these, that the moderate and sober part of the Country think there is just reason to complain of the abuses of Representation and the heavy load of Taxes, and that no measure which does not hold out some conciliatory view of a redress of these grievances, is well calculated to secure the peace of the Country; that I will not attend the proposed Meetings for the sole purpose of declaring Loyalty, but should be happy to promote such a Declaration coupled with a Petition to Parliament, or Declaration to the Public to this effect. After this account of my letter to William Chaytor, Esq; &c. you will anticipate my reply to your questions. I think Meetings of the Great Towns in the West-Riding very desirable for these joint purposes; but I think it prudent, and even necessary, for reasons which I have not time to state this post, not to load the measures of the respective Meetings with more matter than what I have here mentioned, and most particularly not to take notice of the impending War at present.\*

Believe me ever, dear Sir,

Cordially your's,

C. WYVILL.

\* For the sake of brevity some unimportant sentences in this letter are omitted.

LETTER

## LETTER VIII.

*From* SAMUEL SHORE, Esq; to the Rev.  
C. WYVILL.

MEEASBROOK, December 22, 1792.

My Dear Sir,

**I** THANK you for your two letters and the copy of your reasons for not attending the present Meetings in your part of the Country. I thoroughly agree with you that those Meetings will not tend to good, unless something conciliatory and expressive of the People's wishes for a Reform of Parliament be brought forward at them. No Meeting is yet talked of at Sheffield, and I own I think one would do much harm, without propositions of this nature were proposed at it. The People, on the Meeting upon the first Proclamation, negatived any Address by a very large majority, and might probably now negative a mere Declaration of Loyalty. I have on the other side sent you a copy of what I sketched out last week, as what I suppose might most likely include all the Reformers here\*. If that could

\* For the declaration here alluded to, which though prepared was not offered to the subsequent Meeting at Sheffield by Mr. Shore, see the Preliminary Papers prefixed to this Volume. In times of greater candour the Editor conceives it would be unnecessary by inserting that declaration to guard the reputation of his excellent friend from the possibility of injury upon mere conjecture and surmise; but the Paper in question by the Editor's advice was not proposed to that Meeting; and if it were not inserted in this Volume the advice to some might appear to justify suspicion. It is his wish therefore, and it is his duty, as far as possible to satisfy the most distrustful of his Readers or if it be too much to hope to satisfy, at least to silence them by the production of the declaration.

be done, and all would unite, it would be a real and great advantage; but I question whether the Friends of Reform would agree to any thing short of an express and open Declaration in favour of a more equal Representation, and whether those who might be for calling a Meeting, would agree to this, I cannot say: Any thing that touched upon Taxes would alarm the latter much beyond what I have inserted, and might not here be so proper, on various accounts. I fear the rage and madness of Burke and Windham, with the inclination of the Governing Powers, may hurry us into War, and I dread the consequences of so rash a measure. In great haste, but with true regard,

I am ever,

Dear Sir,

Most cordially yours,

SAM. SHORE.

### LETTER IX.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to SAMUEL SHORE,  
Esq.*

BURTON-HALL, Dec. 28th, 1792.

My Dear Sir,

I Thank you for the communication of your intended Resolutions, and for myself alone, would have no hesitation to concur with you. But at this time, and for Sheffield and for you, I doubt their propriety. The time is full of jealousy and violence; Sheffield is supposed

posed to be Republican, and you are a Dissenter. I therefore would advise the utmost caution in your proceedings, and that nothing be added to your professions of loyalty to the King, and attachment to the Constitution, save only the most respectful expression of your wish and hope, that at this crisis lenient and conciliatory measures may be adopted by Government, especially respecting the abuses of Parliamentary Representation in general, and the particular hardship of Sheffield unrepresented, though risen so high in wealth and population. What relates to this subject cannot be too delicately touched at present; afterwards, if no redress is given, Petitions may come forward, and with more effect, for so mild a measure having been now agreed to. Perhaps the Duke of Norfolk would be a proper channel to convey to Government your humble request, if your Resolutions should take no other notice of the letter, than that one to his Grace on the subject of Parliamentary Reform was proposed and agreed to. Taxes better let alone.

If Sheffield is cautious, I hope we may have something decisive from the North Riding, and in some time after that from the County at large.

I am, dear Sir,

Your's ever,

C. WYVILL.

LETTER

## LETTER X.

*From SAMUEL SHORE, Esq; to the Rev. C.*  
*WYVILL.*

*MEERSBROOK, January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1793.*

My Dear Sir,

**P**ERMIT me to begin by wishing you and all your's a happy New Year, and many succeeding ones, and that this which we have just now entered may be propitious to such a Reform in the Representation as will extinguish the discontents which pervade the Country, notwithstanding the present apparent full flowing tide of loyalty, and as will be sufficiently extensive, not only to give general satisfaction, but also to prove, on trial, a real security to the liberties, the happiness, and prosperity of the People. In the next place, I must thank you for your last letter, and inform you, that I took your advice, and did not bring forward my propositions at the Meeting held yesterday at Sheffield, but acquiesced in a declaration prepared by our friend Mr. Wilkinson, one of which will cover this letter. I did this for the sake of harmony and conciliation, though I own I had great difficulty to bring my mind to agree to any thing short of an open declaration for a speedy Reform of Parliament. I am happy to think that you did good by the manner in which you managed to procure a degree of positive approbation to that measure, though you were too late to carry your first proposal. Your second would not, I believe, have been unanimously

unanimously agreed to here, though we could have carried even mine, had we been disposed to do so, by numbers; but we should have had the majority of the Gentlemen against us, many of whom are Friends to Reform, therefore it may have been as well that we permitted the Meeting to conclude amicably and unanimously; and the great cause of Reform may have gained by this forbearance. So many of the Sheffield Constitutional Society attended, and others of their way of thinking, that I am persuaded we might have carried by numbers any thing in favour of Reform, had we deemed it prudent and right so to do. I have the pleasure to inform you, that I never attended a more orderly, peaceable, or quiet Public Meeting, notwithstanding the majority, I believe, consisted of Mechanics, and Members of the Constitutional Society. One of them made a little objection as to the place of meeting not being large enough, and on that account he thought it might be called a partial one, but he was opposed by another of their Members, who said it was, in his opinion, a fair open Meeting: the first said, he thought the alarms created for bad purposes, and that he saw no reason to present flattering addresses on the occasion; but when it was told him, that nothing of that kind was meant, he said no more. The other Member, after the proceedings of the Meeting were finished, expressed his approbation of them, and of our Government by King, Lords, and Commons, in a manner that gave general satisfaction; and the rest, by their concurrence,

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and very handsome behaviour, gained great credit. And yet these, my dear Sir, are the men who have been so much calumniated. I shall also send you to-morrow a paper I carried to be printed, addressed to the Reforming Societies, and exhorting them to continue to answer the abuse of their opponents by peaceable and meritorious behaviour\*. I have only time to add, that I am ever,

Dear Sir,

Very cordially your's,

SAM. SHORE.

P.S. You see the Declaration of the Meeting begins by bearing honourable testimony to the peaceable disposition of the inhabitants of the town, notwithstanding the strong reports to the contrary.

\* It is impossible in this account to discover the least spark of disaffection to the Constitution existing at Sheffield, in the year 1792. It was indeed the account which a friend had given; but that friend a man above every exception. To support his testimony, however, the Declaration adopted by the Sheffield Meeting on the 31st of December, 1792, is inserted among the Preliminary Papers.

NUMBER

NUMBER V.

*Containing the EDITOR's miscellaneous Correspondence in the year 1793.*

LETTER I.

*From the Rev. Dr. PRIESTLEY to the Rev. C. WYVILL.*

Rev. Sir,

I Take the liberty to return you thanks for your excellent letter to Mr. Pitt, received of Mr. Lindsey. It is of particular value in this very critical time, and every Friend of Liberty owes you the greatest obligations. I hope it may be the means of recovering the Liberty of the Press\*, which we have

\* Among the advantages which this Nation has derived from the Revolution in 1688, there is none more prominent, or of greater value, than the Toleration which has been almost uniformly enjoyed ever since that event, under laws less liberal than they ought to have been, but administered with a generous policy, which in a great measure supplied their defects. But the time was fast approaching when the rage of Intolerance was to burst out, with a degree of violence unknown for ages; and he who thus justly complained of the fettered state of the Press, was to be the much-injured object of Popular Persecution, and might justly complain that he could not breathe with safety the air of his native Country. In justice to the Minister, it must be owned, that there is no ground for suspicion that the barbarities alluded to were instigated by him, or by any authority employed with his consent. But he cannot be exculpated from the charge that his influence was not sufficiently exerted to repress the spirit of Intolerance, to punish the excesses of a lawless Rabble, and to secure to the venerable Sufferer that compensation which was due to him. Some recompence for his loss of property was indeed obtained by Dr. Priestley; but it was insufficient even as a pecuniary compensation, and it was gained, after a long delay, by the verdict of a Jury. On this occasion it behoved the Government to prevent any just complaint

have in a great measure lost. You will not be molested, and under your wing others may be safe. I am, Reverend Sir,

Your very humble Servant,

J. PRIESTLEY †.

March 7th, 1793.

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## LETTER II.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to the Rev. Dr.  
PRIESTLEY.*

BURTON-HALL, March 13th, 1793.

Rev. Sir,

I Have received the favour of your obliging letter, and I am very happy to find, that you approve mine to Mr. Pitt, and think the publication of it may contribute in some degree to remove those restraints which have been lately imposed upon the Liberty of the Press. With respect to the War with France, I am aware how unavailing it must be, in the present state of political opinion, to argue against it; and with respect to Political Re-

complaint that redress was slowly or inadequately obtained. The merit of the Sufferer, as a Philosopher at least, intitled him to their assistance; and since no satisfaction could be made him even by the power of Government, for the more atrocious injuries of a personal nature, Justice and true Policy required that the pecuniary recompence should have been ample and speedy. The narrow and vindictive spirit which withheld their aid, marks with dishonour the character of that Administration.

† The Editor has here to acknowledge his want of recollection, when in his note to Dr. Priestley's letter to him, of the 14th of February, 1782, he affirmed that letter to be the only one he had received from him. This now before the Reader was unexpectedly found, on examining his papers of a subsequent date.—See the note alluded to at page 157 of the 4th Volume of his Political Papers,

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formation, how hopeless to attempt it at this moment; yet I am confident, that nothing which at this time may be rationally said by any one, against the War, or in favour of a temperate Reformation, will ultimately prove to have been a useless testimony.

I have the mortification to find that several persons, whom I sincerely respect, blame me much for having written and published this letter to Mr. Pitt, which they think very reprehensible, not as a composition on account of any gross defects which they have observed in the style or argument, but as an action which appears to them unseemly, and not consistent with correct morality. Could I perceive that I have done the least injustice to Mr. Pitt, or that I have treated him without candour or respect, I should regret it to the last moment of my life. But I am satisfied that in my letter to him no allusion can be found to aught that is confidential, or that might not have been easily collected by the Public from what was before understood, that his Letters, and the Heads of his Bill, are properly to be considered as Public Papers, and justly may be held by me in the manner stated in my letter, *in behalf of the Public*; and that as I feel no malevolence or disrespect to Mr. Pitt, but much the contrary, so none has been expressed in the least degree in the Letter addressed to him. I trust it is unnecessary to state more at large to you my means of justification; I may possibly be obliged, in my own defence, to explain my conduct to the Public; but as matters stand  
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at present, it is most probable, I think, that nothing of this misunderstanding will transpire, and consequently no defence will be necessary †. But I wished to apprise you, Sir, that if any such imputations should reach you, I do not admit the justice of them, but think myself able to demonstrate that my conduct on this occasion is not liable to any reproach.

I am, Rev. Sir, with great respect,

Your obliged and obedient servant,

C. WYVILL.

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LETTER III.\*

*From T. BRAND HOLLIS, Esq; to the Rev.  
C. WYVILL.*

Dear Sir,

I THANK you for the letter, and that you have spoke out, I am persuaded it will do good. Reform of Parliament is much canvassed, and a moderate Reform will not now content the People, who are more informed than they were. Knowledge sometimes comes by an afflatus, and its progress is rapid and universal, and not to be withstood.

The human race seems to be raised in the scale of beings, and will never be degraded more.

† In this expectation the Editor was mistaken. He found it necessary, in 1796, when he published his Correspondence with Mr. Pitt, to exculpate himself, by a statement of his case; for which, see page 51 of the 4th volume of his Political Papers.

\* Some unimportant sentences in this letter are omitted; and some also in the subjoined answer by the Editor.

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The French Revolution is the most extraordinary event. that has happened in the history of the world, and it is big with great consequences.

The calamitous circumstances attending great revolutions might be avoided, and will be in future, tho' now much to be dreaded.

I am, with regard, dear Sir,

Most sincerely your's,

T. BRAND HOLLIS.

*March 8th, 1793.*

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#### LETTER IV.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to THOMAS BRAND HOLLIS, Esq.*

**I** WISH, my dear Sir, that you and the other Friends of Liberty in London could see the dangers of a Revolution in as strong a light as I do. To guard against those dangers was with me one principal reason for writing my letter to Mr. Pitt. A moderate Reform might, I think, be carried with safety, if the London Meetings would be content with it; but if you put the contest on the alternative of a Revolution, or remaining as we are, the question will be certainly decided against you. I trust your Society, the Friends of the People, will see this in a proper light, and beware of going too far.\*

I am ever, my dear Sir,

Very sincerely your's,

C. WYVILL.

BURTON-HALL, *March 17, 1793.*

\* To his connection with this benevolent man, the Editor was introduced in the year 1780, at the first Meeting of Deputies, of which Mr. Brand Hollis was appointed a Member by the Westminster Committee.

## LETTER V.

*From JOHN LEE, Esq; to the Rev. C. WYVILL.*

STAINDROP, 10th March, 1793.

Dear Sir,

THE Continuance of my very ill health having hitherto made it impossible for me to undertake a journey to London, I did not receive the favour of your present till last night, for which I take the earliest opportunity of returning you my warmest thanks. To say the truth, I do not know that I ever read a Book which I so much admire, and in which I see nothing to disapprove; the present state of Political Opinion makes it of no importance, that I cannot add one to an almost invisible Minority who are ineffectually seeking to save our devoted Country from one of the greatest National Calamities. \* I thank you for your very kind wishes, and am with great respect,

Dear Sir, your's most sincerely,

JOHN LEE.

Committee. He was the faithful friend of Dr. John Jebb; like him, an ardent lover of Liberty, and like him, as the Editor conceived, sometimes misled by views of theoretical perfection from the great object of practical utility. Hence in the Editor's correspondence with Mr. B. Hollis, as in that with his most worthy friend, Dr. John Jebb, there was sometimes a mixture of controversy, but without the least taint of that acrimony which is apt to be generated by differences of political opinion. The Editor's connection with Mr. B. Hollis has remained uninterrupted by their diversity of sentiment on various occasions; and he acknowledges with pleasure and gratitude, that he has received many proofs of the esteem, the confidence, and anxious solicitude of his good friend.

\* This zealous Friend to Liberty never was able to rejoin the small but highly honoured Band alluded to; his indisposition increased, and by a premature death soon after this time deprived the

LETTER VI.

*From the Rev. WILLIAM MASON to the Rev.  
C. WYVILL.*

ASTON, *March 15th, 1793.*

Dear Sir,

ON my return on the 12th from Town, where I passed the last three months, I found a present from you of your late Publication, of which I had received there some account from certain of our joint Friends, tho' of different sentiments in point of Politics.

As I profess myself to be one of those two classes of no inconsiderable number, who think that your present attack upon Mr. Pitt, and your present eulogy of Mr. Fox, are both of them equally *ill-timed*, to use the mildest term possible, I hope you will be candid enough to forgive me if I withhold those thanks for the receipt of your Pamphlet, which I could not give you without a breach of that sincerity with which I have ever been used to meet my best friends, and which you have hitherto always experienced in,

Dear Sir,

Your very faithful servant,

W. MASON.

My best compliments attend Mrs. Wyvill, and good wishes for the health of your young family.

the Public of his assistance when it was needed most, and himself of those professional honours to which his learning, his sterling sense, and a masculine eloquence suited to the boldness and vigour of his mind, justly entitled him. The Editor reflects with pleasure unabated by many years that he enjoyed the good-will and esteem of such a Man.

LETTER

## LETTER VII.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to the Rev.  
W. MASON.*

BURTON-HALL, March 20th, 1793.

My Dear Sir,

I AM always happy when any part of my public conduct meets your approbation, and I reflect with pleasure that you often have approved it. In two instances last year and this, I have not been so fortunate: I am sorry for it; but I am neither surprised nor discouraged.

With respect to the letter to Mr. Pitt, though I can most truly assert that it was written from my conviction that the present measures of Government have a very dangerous tendency, yet I am sufficiently aware of the difficulty of such discussions not to expect that my Friends will readily and unanimously concur in my Political Opinions; but being impressed with that conviction, I should not have done my duty to the Public if I had not declared my sentiments, and stated the reasons which appeared to me to support them. If I am in the right, it is a matter of much importance that the Cabinet and the Public should think as I do; if I am wrong, it is but the harmless error of a well-intending Individual, and as such, I trust it will be considered by you and others whose opinion may differ from mine. I will only add, that I reflect with satisfaction upon my conduct on this occasion; and I see no reason to doubt that the

Public will do justice to the integrity and impartiality with which I am conscious the letter to Mr. Pitt was written.

I am ever, my dear Sir,

With great regard,

Your's very sincerely,

C. WYVILL.

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### LETTER VIII.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to SAMUEL SHORE, Esq.*

BURTON-HALL, March 30, 1793.

My Dear Sir,

**I**T gives me great pleasure to find you approve my letter to Mr. Pitt, and think it well-timed. I have never done any thing since I first took a part in politics which was more useless to the Public, or which, on reflection, gives me more satisfaction. But my satisfaction is not unmixed with regret, to find some Friends whom I highly value consider it as an unfeemly action to publish such a letter, after it had been privately sent to Mr. Pitt. I do not admit the force of this and other objections that have been made; neither will I trouble you with the detail of my replies. I have no displeasure at Mr. Pitt; I had no interest to declare against his present system, except that interest which every individual has, that public misfortune may be averted. I have divulged nothing confidential; but papers communicated to me by a Minister on the  
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the business of the Association, under no seal of secrecy, I think I have a right to keep; not to use them for any malevolent purpose, or wantonly to produce them, when their appearance could only gratify an idle curiosity, and when Mr. Pitt himself might possibly be meditating some improvement in his Plan; but as a faithful Trustee of the Association, and in some measure of the Public also, to preserve them for production when they may be produced with perfect propriety, and visibly for no other reason, with no other view than to promote the welfare of the Public in the important business of Reformation.

I am not quite clear that it has been prudent in your Society to determine to bring the question of Parliamentary Reform before the House this Session; but the Resolution having been taken and declared to the Public, I see not how it could be avoided. I will trouble you to insert my name in the intended Petition which I have seen and approve; but I fear it will not be prudent to circulate it at present for signatures in this Country. In the temper of the Country now it would be highly inexpedient to call a County Meeting on the subject; and though it would not be difficult to procure several hundreds of names in this neighbourhood, it would give offence which might retard the holding of a great County Meeting; *that* is the object we must keep in view, and yet not be in too great a hurry to seize it. I shall attend the Quarter Sessions in ten days, when I shall probably meet several of our Friends, and I have writ-

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ten to others to consult them ; but the result, I believe, will be such as I have already intimated. Mr. B. Hollis sent me the Petition a few days ago, and wished to have my assistance. There could be no doubt of that ; but whether it will be proper to do more than sign it myself, is a matter which, for the good of the Cause in Yorkshire, I must not hastily determine. \*

I am ever, my dear Sir,

Most cordially your's,

C. WYVILL.

## LETTER IX.

*From the Rev. Dr. TOWERS to the Rev.*  
C. WYVILL.

Rev. Sir,

**I** RECEIVED the favour of your very able letter to Mr. Pitt, for which I am extremely obliged to you. You have pointed out, in a very strong and just light, the pernicious tendency of that unnecessary and impolitic War (not to make use of those harsher epithets which might justly be applied to it) in which the Nation is now unhappily in-

\* Mr. Shore, in his letter of the 25th of March, 1793, had informed the Editor, that the Friends of the People, after much debate, had determined to petition Parliament for a Reform in the Representation, and that they hoped to be supported by similar Petitions from the Country. To avoid loading the Reader with some passages of little political importance, and repetitions of what had been said before by other Correspondents, it was thought advisable that Mr. Shore's letter should be omitted, and this explanation should be given of that part of it which occasioned the Editor's reply in this letter of March 30th, 1793.

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volved. It appears to me, that at no period in the history of this country have the People been more deluded by men in power than at present; and I think that such has been the conduct of Mr. Pitt, that he has not now the least claim to the confidence of the Public. It appears to be the full determination of the Court and Ministry not to attend to the most moderate proposals for a Parliamentary Reform, and our foreign and domestic politics seem to be exactly of the same complexion. As to the junction of Great Britain with the confederacy of German Despots, it will, I think, be a disgrace to this country as long as any History of Europe shall remain.

I am, Rev. Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

JOSEPH TOWERS.

ST. JOHN'S SQUARE,  
CLERKENWELL, No. 26,  
April 26, 1793.

## LETTER X.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to the Rev. Dr.  
TOWERS.*

HARTLEPOOL, May 18th, 1793.

Rev. Sir,

IT is a great satisfaction to me to find that my Publications in support of Civil and Religious Liberty have been repeatedly honoured with your approbation. The last, which some of the Friends of Mr. Pitt have severely censured, but of which you and other steady Friends

Friends to Liberty have been pleased to express a very different opinion, is, I am sensible, little intitled to your commendation on any other account than that of the rectitude of intention with which it was written.—Some years ago, the business of Political Reformation threw me into a pretty close connection with the Minister, whose sincerity, at that time, I saw no reason to distrust. Since that, my confidence in him, as a Patriot disposed to make sacrifices in favour of Public Liberty, and to run risques to effect a Reformation of Parliament, has been gradually weakened; till at last his conduct in the late great debate on Mr. Grey's Motion on that subject has fully satisfied me that Mr. Pitt is not the person to whom the Nation will owe, in any great degree, the renovation of its Constitution; that he will run no risque to preserve his consistency; that his principal object is not to improve the Constitution, and meliorate the condition of his Countrymen, but to secure the permanence of his power, the duration of which, for a single day, he seems unwilling to hazard for the attainment of that Political Reformation he formerly thought of such mighty importance. I am sincerely sorry for this change; it is a mortifying instance of the imperfection of human nature; and in consequence of it we sustain the loss of a powerful friend, by whose assistance the restoration of our Constitution might have been more speedily effected, and many dangers might have been avoided. Yet I hope there is vigour and prudence in a sufficient measure

measure in the English Nation to accomplish a substantial Reform without his help, and without incurring the dangers of a great Revolution. And in this expectation I the more readily indulge myself, from some late publications, and some late events, in which you, Sir, as a Member of the Society, the Friends of the People, have probably had a share. Their Reports on the Representation of England and Scotland, and their Petitions so wisely grounded on those Reports, cannot fail to produce a great effect on the mind of the Public.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

With great respect,

Your most obedient servant,

C. WYVILL.

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### LETTER XI.

*From* MARMADUKE CONSTABLE, Esq; *to the*  
Rev. C. WYVILL.

WASSAND, near BEVERLEY,  
*April 30th, 1793.*

Sir,

I HAVE been prevented returning you my thanks for your late Publication so soon as I ought to have done, indeed by the negligence of the Bookseller I did not receive it till the 7th of this month. If I venture to talk a little of Politics to you, I beg you will consider it as a mode of acknowledging the pleasure and satisfaction I had in reading both

both your Pamphlets, more respectful than keeping silence entirely on the subjects of them, and not from any confidence in my own opinions.

I must own the reasons given by Mr. Fox in the House of Commons, and by yourself in your late Letter, for suspending the War till the necessity for it became more visible, appear to me to be very powerful, notwithstanding the tide of Popular Opinion, which runs so violently the other way; strange that it should with the same Generation that saw the beginning and end of the last War.

I have always thought that multiplying Electors, unless some measures were also taken to improve and purify a little the motives of Election, would not answer the end proposed, and perhaps I might quote in support of this notion some neighbouring Boroughs, where the Right is as popular as even the Duke of Richmond could wish; nor does it seem quite clear that shortening much the duration of Parliaments during the present state of men's minds would be attended with beneficial effects.

Purifying men's minds, you will say, is fine talking, and yet it seems that experiments for that purpose might be tried, and not without some prospect of success, and with some of the Old Institutions.

If the Clergy could be prevailed upon (effecting it by compulsion would not do) to be resistent, and entering into the spirit of their profession become real Pastors, might not the good effects be considerable even with respect to the House of Commons; but if such a change

is not to be looked for, why should not the stipends of the Parish Clerks be made so competent as to invite men capable of teaching to read readily, and write, that so if the people cannot obtain Teachers, they may teach themselves?

The endowed Schools also should be looked to; they are now many of them sunk into sinecures, for which perhaps the Patrons of Prebends and Canonries are more to blame than the Masters of such Schools; and lastly, not to prate longer, it might not be difficult to give a little new life to the supine Magistracies of Corporate Towns, which are now too much occupied by men whose situations are not sufficiently independent.

I am, Sir, your most obedient servant,  
M. CONSTABLE.\*

## LETTER XII.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to MARMADUKE  
CONSTABLE, Esq.*

HARTLEPOOL, May 21<sup>st</sup>, 1793.

Sir,

**I**T is a great satisfaction to me to find, from your obliging letter of the 30th of April, that you approve what I have said in my late Publication

\* To this respectable Magistrate the Editor's acknowledgements are justly due for the obliging readiness with which he granted his consent, that this letter might be inserted in this Collection. Mr. Constable never engaged with the Yorkshire Association in their endeavours to effect a Political Reform: yet with them he was an enemy to the corrupting principle of Government; and he felt with them that some correction of abuses in Elections was absolutely necessary. He is deservedly esteemed as a man of a truly honourable character; a Friend alike to Rational Religion, and a well-regulated Freedom.

Publication against the present War ; from which, if persevered in by our Government, the most ruinous consequences seem justly to be apprehended. With respect to Political Reformation, our sentiments, I flatter myself, are nearly agreed. I certainly think with you, that the corruption, and many other disgraceful circumstances attending our Elections, are evils of great magnitude, and without an effectual correction of those abuses, it is very immaterial whether the present gross inequality in our Representation in Parliament be rectified or not. But I fear all attempts to purify the morals of the lower classes of the people in any great degree, however laudable they may be, for the rectitude of their design, will prove defective and almost nugatory in their execution, so long as the acknowledged practice of Government spreads the taint of corruption among the superior classes. The principle of Government itself must first be rendered virtuous, and then the integrity of the upper classes will naturally operate downwards upon the lower people, and thus work a general reformation of morals, by what inattentive observers might suppose to be a mere political regulation, calculated only to take power out of one scale, and put it in another. To endeavour to push reformation upwards, by first purifying the inferior part of the people, and by their virtue counteracting the mischievous effects of a Government whose principle is vice, is little better than attempting to purify the stream below, while poison is at the source. But let the poison which is  
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at the spring head be removed, and the stream will flow pure and wholesome, without farther trouble.

When Mr. Pitt's motion, about eight years ago, for effecting a Reform in the Representation was negatived, it was at first supposed that measures for rendering Elections unexpensive and free from tumult and other irregularities would be readily admitted, and these were always considered as the indispensable concomitants of that plan. With that view, a plan for a Register of Voters was proposed by Lord Stanhope, in order that the Poll might be taken in many places in each county, and was passed into a law; but being perhaps too operose and complicated, it was objected to on that account, and also for some smaller difficulties attending it, and by the united force of the Aristocracy it was repealed. Another plan was then suggested at Mr. Wilberforce's desire; but, tho' this plan was perfectly easy to be executed, being nothing more than an application of the principle on which a List of Jurors is framed, to the formation of a List of Voters, and tho' it was approved and drawn out technically in the form of a Bill, ready for presentation to Parliament, yet having been put off from year to year, in hopes of meeting a more favourable temper of the House, that more auspicious season has never arrived, and it is now evident that this and every similar improvement must be given up till the Nation shall interfere with greater efficacy to rectify the principal defects and abuses of our political system. When that has been

been done, and Parliament has become what the Constitution means it should be, the check and controul of Government, instead of being a mere tool to effect its purposes, good or bad, with greater facility, various Reforms in different departments of our National System may be expected to take place. Among these I heartily wish to see an abolition of Tithes, and that good Laws may be strictly put in force against Pluralities and Non-Residence. My sentiments entirely accord with yours on these subjects, and I return you many thanks for the pleasure of perusing the papers relating to them, which you have had the goodness to send me. Those respecting your dispute with Mr. W. shall be returned with particular care.

I am, Sir, with great respect,

Your most obedient servant,

C. WYVILL.\*

\* The institution of a Parochial Clergy, in the present condition of the Community, seems wisely calculated to improve the Morals of the People. It must be owned, at least, that if the Morality of the Nation is not as elevated as it ought to be, it would be likely, without the assistance of the Clergy, to sink to a lower degree of depravity than it has now reached; it would be a proof of ungrateful prejudice to deny that many of our Parish Priests are men of distinguished Learning, and an elevated character of Virtue, who scorn the lures of Power and Corruption, and, retired in humble situations, devote their best efforts to promote the Cause of Morality and Rational Religion.

What could be done by them has been done to enlighten the Body of the People, and inspire them with the love of Virtue; but that their Zeal and Integrity have failed to produce that general elevation of mind which is so truly to be wished, and which can best be founded on Rational Religion, seems to be admitted. To what is the failure to be imputed? to what so obviously as to the Prevalence of corrupt Maxims in the Superior Classes, counteracting the efforts of the Virtuous Clergy, and infecting their less wise and worthy Brethren with a mean and selfish secularity which is the reverse of that spirit which the Gospel inculcates? So long as the spirit

## LETTER XIII.

*From the Rev. G. WYVILL to WILLIAM  
BURGH, Esq.*

BURTON-HALL, Nov. 18, 1793.

My Dear Sir,

I GIVE my consent to what appears to be so much your wish and Mr. Blanchard's, viz. that Mr. Morton Pitt's Paper, shewing the distressed state of the Poor in some Districts which he had examined, and Dr. Knox's Paper, giving an account of the late outrage offered to him and his family, and the sermon which provoked such treatment, shall be withdrawn. This you will of course impute to other causes than my confidence in Mr. Pitt, either as a Minister, whose general conduct I approve, or whose attachment to the Cause of Political Reform I think unquestionable. In my judgment, Mr. Pitt has changed the system he began with, and which we agreed in supporting. He was a Friend to Peace, to Oeconomy, and to Political Reformation: he has involved us in a War which renders his œconomy unavailing, which in a single year will absorb all his savings; and he has done his utmost to suppress Reformation,

spirit of our Government is debased by corruption, so long it will be rational to expect that our established Instructions, in part, will be contaminated by it; and their efforts to exalt and dignify the general character of our People, will be in proportion inefficacious and unsuccessful. To purify that spirit, therefore, by a Radical Reform of our Political Abuses, and consequently to introduce among our Clergy a more generous and disinterested zeal to discharge their duty, must be the wish of the Moralist, even if he could be supposed wholly to disregard the Preservation of National Liberty.

by confounding those who pressed only for his own moderate measures, with the most violent enemies of Order and Property. I own frankly to you, therefore, I no longer wish him and his measures success. If he gives us a Peace this Winter, I shall rejoice at what I think absolutely necessary to prevent the greatest calamities; but my confidence he never more will have. If he does not give us a Peace, or make some reasonable overture for it, which since the capture of Toulon he certainly has the means of making, I do sincerely believe his War against the French will be the most unpopular War we have seen, and Mr. Pitt a more hated Minister than Lord North himself. You are mistaken, I believe, with respect to the present sentiments of the Country; the wish for Peace is general, as far as I have observed. You will excuse me, I hope, if I add, surely my good friend, whose eye is so quick and piercing, whose mind is so enlarged and philosophical, whose principles formerly led him to defend the Rights and Interests of the People with so much zeal, will not much longer be misled by the declamation of Mr. Burke, to lend his support to a system whose tendency is to confirm the Usurpations of the Great, to perpetuate the evil principle of our Government, and which pursues these joint objects of the Crown and the Aristocracy, by means most pernicious to the Community, by a series of the severest measures, and a War which is big with ruin to the industrious part of the Nation, and which cannot be long persevered

levered in without driving the People to desperation, or forcing them, by a strong military power, to submit, like slaves, in silent dismay.

Many thanks to you, my dear Sir, for all your friendly wishes. I returned last night, with my numerous family, from Leven Grove, all pretty well; I hope you and your Ladies are in perfect health.

I am ever, with great regard,

Most sincerely your's,

C. WYVILL.

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LETTER XIV.

From SAMUEL SHORE, Esq; to the Rev.

C. WYVILL.

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MILLSBROOK, Dec: 4th, 1793.

My Dear Sir,

**F**ROM the severity of the late prosecutions in the three Kingdoms, and the marked opposition to all Reform, which is now so prevalent, I fear there is little likelihood that salutary councils will have any avail. On the other hand, you see the Scotch Convention, joined by some Societies from England, (the Sheffield among the rest) has declared expressly for Universal Suffrage. I am grieved to find that Meeting has taken such a step, and given itself the title of a Convention for the purpose of obtaining Universal Suffrage and Annual Parliaments, because I think that the true line of conduct to be observed by all the

Friends of Parliamentary Reform, should be to petition generally for such an important and beneficial regulation, and at the same time endeavour to bring about such an union for that necessary measure as will induce the Legislature to pay a due regard to the application, but without prescribing the mode. Yet it might not be amiss for Individuals, as well as Societies, to give their opinions respecting the most effectual scheme of Reform, that every possible light may be thrown on the subject, and the fullest information relative to it may be submitted to the public judgment. So long as these sentiments proceed from Individuals or particular Societies, though they should be pretty generally in favour of Universal Suffrage, yet they do not preclude those from whom they come from heartily espousing plans of Reform more attainable, and of considerably less extent. This you have frequently found in the course of your meritorious exertions in this field of arduous and honourable contest. But when a Convention from a whole Kingdom, if at all a true representation of the prevailing opinions of that part of the Country, decides fully for Universal Suffrage, it will be no easy matter to get them to recede from such a declaration, when a scheme of Reform less comprehensive, but judged by cool reflecting men substantially advantageous, shall become the objects of discussion with a probability of succeeding, by the union of all the Friends to a Reform in the Representation, with satisfaction to the bulk of the People. What then should now be the conduct of

of those steady Friends to Parliamentary Reform who have never yet declared themselves for, or decidedly against, Universal Suffrage? Among this number I rank you, and here I arrange myself; for though I may often in conversation have taken the part of Universal Suffrage, in order to hear the arguments on both sides, and to try their solidity, as far as my capacity would permit me, to the bottom, I have never yet been concerned in any active measure to accomplish that most extensive Reform, and probably never may be so. But I am humbly, though clearly of opinion that the cause of Reform will be inevitably lost, if its firm, but moderate Supporters, do not continue to adhere to their former line of conduct, and still steadfastly decline to enter into any resolves against Universal Suffrage. Should they form and publish Resolutions to this purport, they would split and divide the Friends of Reform without gaining a single Proselyte from its opposers; their only proper and consistent mode of counteracting Universal Suffrage will be to bring forward a well-digested effectual plan, which, tho' short of the Universal One, shall be so comprehensive as not to be successfully combated by the warm Friends to Universal Suffrage, and yet so regardful of the great interests of the Country as to bid fair for powerful support, when the necessity of some Reform becomes evident. That this necessity now exists, I am thoroughly convinced; that it may soon be perceived by those who are at present blind to it, and whose true interest it is to promote a speedy Reform, I sincerely wish.

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should they let an early opportunity slip, they may repent of their error when it is too late. I entirely agree with what you say in your letter to Mr. Pitt, that any scheme of Reform to be now acceptable to the People must be more comprehensive and general than those that have been hitherto brought before the Legislature. My idea of the outline of a practical plan is, that it should include both numbers and property, and that there should be a due mixture of these in every particular Election, which Elections ought to be so regulated as most effectually to prevent disorder and confusion, and so as not to deprave the morals of the People, for whose benefit and protection they are intended. Suffrage should be so widely diffused among all ranks and classes of the People as to secure the Rights and Liberties of each, both of those who are entrusted with the right of Suffrage and those who are not; likewise in such a manner as to preclude, as far as possible, any one from obtaining a Seat in the House of Commons by improper and unworthy methods; and, when there, if the Members should pursue their own private emolument in preference to the Public welfare, to produce a moral certainty that they would not be chosen a second time.

You make the right distinction when you say that all schemes of Revolution in this Country should be discountenanced and opposed, and every just plan of Reform encouraged and promoted. Whether you will do Mr. Cooper justice in classing him with the Advocates for Revolution, I do not recollect the

the whole of his performance sufficiently to say ; but in one part, page 16, he expressly declares against Revolution, and asserts that no man is justifiable in this Country in going further than an effectual and complete Reform in the Representation and Duration of Parliaments. I have as yet had no connection with the Sheffield Constitutional Society, and now they have sent a Deputy to the Convention at Edinburgh, and have in that public way decided for Universal Suffrage. I do not think it would be of service to the great Cause of Parliamentary Reform for me, who am engaged with another Society, which does not go so far, to have any. Therefore, unless circumstances should arise to alter my opinion, I have no such intentions. But I should, as a sincere Friend of Reform, be unwilling to see them oppressed by violence and prejudice, when the general tenor of their conduct does not deserve it ; and this, as far as I can learn, has been perfectly orderly, regular, and peaceable, though I find the spirit of the town is represented to be otherwise at a distance. From want of full information, by having no connection with them, as I have mentioned above, I cannot exactly say whether they would approve your moderating plan ; but I rather think they would, if they could be brought to believe that it would be successful in producing a good Reform, as I understand they were pleased with your vindication of the Reformers of England.

I am, dear Sir,

Most cordially your's,

S. SHORE.

## LETTER XV.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to SAMUEL  
SHORE, Esq.*

BURTON-HALL, Dec. 13<sup>th</sup>. 1793.

My Dear Sir,

**I** AM sorry my Pamphlet was not ready some months ago, and am impatient to have it out, since you have informed me of the Resolution of the Scotch Convention to proceed on the principles of Universal Suffrage. On that ground there is no chance of success, and undoubtedly the Minister wishes for nothing more, as I apprehend, than to have it in his power to crush the Reformers at once, by their proposing such an extensive Reform as the Great Body of the Nation would fear to adopt. To make such propositions is the very conduct which tends most to relieve him from his embarrassment; because, without appearing inconsistent, he may reject them, and find his prudence applauded by the Nation. Indeed, I know not whether their adoption of such measures would not have still more pernicious effects than merely enabling Government to quash the question of Reform; it might put it in their power to abridge the Right of Petitioning, or of holding any Public Meeting of the People, which Mr. Young so strenuously recommends, and which their recent imprisonment of Margarot and other Deputies to the Scotch Convention, seems to prove them not disinclined to attempt.

Abhorring,

Abhorring, as I do, what may lead us either to a Revolution or the loss of Popular Rights, I think I cannot do my duty to the Public better, in the present crisis, than by arguing as forcibly as I can against either of these extremes, and hence I am led, in my intended Publication, to combat persons of opposite characters, whose doctrines appear to me to have either one or the other of those dangerous tendencies. In doing this, I have necessarily noticed Mr. Williams and Mr. Cooper; and speaking only of what appears to me not the *design*, but the *tendency* of their writings, I think I cannot possibly have done them any injustice; yet when the proof-sheet comes to me to-morrow, I will, at your desire, revise it, and soften the only expression which may give offence, if I can do it without weakening the effect of the passage in which it occurs\*. I hope you will be still near Sheffield when this piece appears, and may be able

\* It would be to the Editor matter of great concern if in the passage alluded to he has indeed treated Mr. Williams or Mr. Cooper with any injustice.

He does not now perceive it, and hopes he has not been so unfortunate; but if he has, the fault was unintentional. From a letter of Mr. Shore's, of a posterior date, he willingly transcribes a few lines respecting Mr. Cooper, which will probably interest the Reader in his favour, and inspire him with great respect, mixed with compassion for that very able Philosopher and Metaphysician, but persecuted and distressed as a Politician and a Man.

"Your manner of referring to poor Cooper's works is not objectionable; and yet, I confess, I could have wished his name had not been mentioned. He is a distressed man, of a worthy, feeling heart, an acute understanding, and of extensive mental attainments, with perfect integrity; and has very lately been driven from his Country by misfortune and persecution. He was a warm Friend to Parliamentary Reform, and totally denied any evil intentions against the Constitutional Government of this Country."

to influence the Friends of Liberty there to limit their views to somewhat moderate. To persuade this is the object of my Publication, and I hope it will be consonant with the wishes and declarations of your Great Society in London.

I beg my best compliments to your son, with very sincere good wishes to yourself and all the family.

I remain, dear Sir,

Cordially your's,

C. WYVILL.

## LETTER XVI.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to J. R. FENWICK,*  
Esq; M. D.

BURTON-HALL, Dec. 23<sup>d</sup>, 1793.

My Dear Sir,

**I** WISH I could inform you that Yorkshire is in a state of opinion in which Public Meetings for the purpose of Reform might be proposed without imprudence. That is not the case at present, though I think the Minister is daily losing Friends, and the ill consequences of the War being more and more sensibly felt, must gradually dispose the Country to adopt our measures.

To accelerate that disposition, I have thought it might be useful to state more distinctly, and more particularly than I formerly stated in a short *Summary*, the several Articles

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of Mr. Pitt's Plan in 1785; and to add to this statement such farther propositions of Reform as appear necessary in the present state of the Public mind, in order to render that plan, so enlarged, an object worth contending for, and the acquisition of which would probably content the generality of well-informed Friends of the Constitution throughout the Kingdom. In executing this design, I have little, if at all, departed from those terms which I formerly stated to you, and had then the pleasure to find you approved; and in fact, it is in consequence of your approbation of those ideas, and also the approbation of Mr. Spearman and the other worthy Friends whom you consulted upon the occasion, that I have put them together in the form of a regular Plan, and subjoined some observations in answer to such objections as I conceive may be urged against it, either from the quarter of those men who are hostile to every Reform, or of those who would push Reform to the utmost extreme of Theory, without regard to the unfavourable state of the Country, and without fear of those dangerous consequences of various kinds, which every prudent Lover of his Country would shun with the utmost caution. This piece is now finished; the last sheet went back corrected to the Printer this day, and before the end of the week I hope you will receive a packet, containing 20 copies, directed for yourself, and 20 more for Mr. Spearman, to whom I beg you will communicate this letter.—I shall be very happy if you and he  
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are satisfied with this Publication, and think it may be of some use in these very critical times. \*

I am, with great esteem, my dear Sir,

Your obliged and faithful servant,

C. WYVILL.

### LETTER XVII.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to THOMAS BIGGE, Esq.*

BURTON-HALL, Dec. 23<sup>d</sup>, 1793.

Sir,

**I** RECEIVED the favour of your very obliging and very animating letter, for which, and for your zeal to co-operate with the Friends of moderate Reform in the North, and particularly to distribute the Pamphlets which I ventured to trouble you with, and which were drawn up with a view to recommend temperate measures, I return you my sincere thanks. I should much sooner have made you my acknowledgments, had I not wished to wait till I could at the

\* The two letters written to him by the Editor's excellent Friends, Dr. Fenwick and Thomas Bigge, Esq; to which this and the succeeding letter are his answers, have not been found. His answers are inserted here, because they explain the similarity of their sentiments and his, in favour of a moderate Reform, and nearly mark the commencement of a connection which their kind partiality to the Editor, and his high esteem and regard for them have matured to that friendship which has already been to him more than a compensation for the malice and calumny of his Adversaries; and will be, he trusts, the consolation of his declining age.

same time fix some near day before which you will probably receive another packet, containing 20 copies of a new Publication of mine in farther recommendation of the same measures. It struck me some little time ago, that the particulars of Mr. Pitt's Plan in 1785, had never been minutely stated to the Public, tho' a summary account of it had been published soon after the defeat of his motion; and that such a statement of it, with the additional propositions distinctly explained, which in the letter to Mr. Pitt were only hinted, might have a good effect at this time, when so many men are running into the opposite extremes, and seem willing to renounce the Constitution either for Republicanism or for Absolute Monarchy. In this piece, therefore, you will find these particulars united in one Plan, to which are subjoined some observations in defence of it against the objections which may be expected from these opposite quarters. This naturally led me to some animadversions on Mr. Young's late Pamphlet, which appears to me to be the most violent attack upon Liberty that has been made by any Writer since the Revolution; which, with some strictures on the Duke of Richmond and some other Persons of less note, make up the whole of this little piece. I shall be very happy if it meet your approbation, and that of the other worthy Friends of true Constitutional Liberty in Northumberland. And indeed it gave me great pleasure, and was no small encouragement to me to find from the latter part of  
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your letter, that so enlightened, so zealous, and so disinterested a Patriot as the Gentleman I have the honour now to address, wished me to write upon this subject again, at the very time I was employed as he wished me to be. I hope you will receive the packet safe from the hands of Mr. Losh.

I am, &c.

C. WYVILL.

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NUMBER VI.

*Containing the EDITOR'S miscellaneous Correspondence in the year 1794.*

LETTER I.

*From J. R. FENWICK, Esq; M.D. to the Rev.  
C. WYVILL.*

*DURHAM, Jan. 4th, 1794.*

Dear Sir,

**H**AD I not been more than usually engaged, I should before now have thanked you for your attention in sending me your Publication, and for the pleasure I have received from the perusal of it.

I am sorry to find that Yorkshire is not in a disposition to move in the Cause of Parliamentary Reform, as I am inclined to think that a tolerably just estimate of the National opinion may be drawn from the sentiments of so extensive and popular a District. Things are not better here. The Minister loses ground, because men foresee the approach of more extensive national calamity, and the imposition of a heavier Taxation than even the Enemies of the present War could have apprehended; but although the secession from his party has increased the power of Opposition, I do not think that it has much added to the numbers of those who are favourable to a temperate Reform.

Reform. There is no divesting men of party notions, and party men are so loud and clamorous at this time, that the voice of the Moderate cannot be heard. Discussion also, as you justly observe, has given the People more enlarged ideas on the subject of Representation, so that they would now reject, as insufficient, what a few years ago would have gratified all their wishes. This is a natural effect of the investigation which has taken place; but I think that discontent at the conduct of Administration has added to it; the People see a determined opposition to all Reform, however moderate and safe, and feeling this opposition to be hostile to their best interests, they lose their temper, and adopt ideas which a very few years ago they would have rejected with abhorrence. To men in this humour, Universal Suffrage has too strong an allurements not to be eagerly supported by them and accordingly its Supporters are, in proportion to the whole body of Reformers, very numerous indeed.

This presents a melancholy prospect to moderate men, for the two extreme parties are so tenacious of the ground they have taken, that they seem prepared to run all hazards to maintain it. It is fortunate that the Cause of Reform does not at such a time want its moderate Supporters; when the alarm and agitation which now pervade the Kingdom have subsided, their reasoning will be attended to; and if they do not content themselves with too inconsiderable an improvement of the Representation, I hope the  
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bulk of the People will support them. But perhaps, Sir, they will require somewhat more than Mr. Pitt's Plan, even as you have enlarged it.

The surrender of Toulon; the stop put to the Prussian operations in Alsace; the necessity to which the Austrians and our troops seem reduced of acting on the defensive; and the dispersion of the Royalists in Bretagne, must surely convince our Rulers that the Confederacy is unequal to the reduction of France, and yet there are no signs of Peace!

I hope, Sir, that you have quite recovered from your late indisposition, and beg you will believe me to be,

With great respect,

Your humble servant,

J. R. FENWICK.\*

\* The thanks of the Editor are due to his excellent Friend, J. R. Fenwick, Esq; and he pays them with gratitude and pleasure for his obliging permission to publish his letters. He is a man equally amiable and respectable as a Friend and as a Patriot; benevolent and sincere, zealous, intrepid and disinterested: he possesses great and various talents, and he has exerted them with the most judicious prudence, and with the most vigorous and persevering energy in defence of our Political Rights, during the long period in which the Country was agitated nearly to Revolution by the harshness of the late Administration; and the Constitution was threatened with equal ruin by the prevalence of either the Republican or the Monarchal Faction. May the sentiments of a man so ardently zealous for the preservation of Popular Rights, so devoted to the Cause of Political Reform on the true principles of the Constitution, obtain that weight with the Public which their wisdom and moderation so justly deserve.

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LETTER

## LETTER II.

*From J. R. FENWICK, Esq; M. D. to the Rev.  
C. WYVILL.*

DURHAM, March 3d, 1794.

Dear Sir,

**I**F I have so long delayed answering your's of the 31st of January, it has been from a fear of breaking in upon that leisure which you dedicate to pursuits of such public utility. I will not, however, by a longer silence risque the appearance of being insensible to your very obliging attention towards me.—That Universal Suffrage cannot in the present situation of our Country be established without risking the total subversion of the Constitution, must surely be apparent to every man who considers the matter coolly, unbiassed by prejudices, and uninfluenced by a fancied idea of perfection, which perhaps can never be realized, and which certainly cannot be realized at once. But neither the dread of those consequences which might ensue from excessive innovation, nor the hope of obtaining the deceitful praise which so often attaches to weakness, under the title of moderation, will, I trust, induce the true Friends of Constitutional Reform to put up with a delusive palliation of abuses, when nothing can secure our freedom but their substantial correction. I am led to express this fear, from the plan of adding 50 Members to the Counties, having in a former instance been in contemplation, in order to appease the Nation, then irritated

tated by the miseries of an impolitic, ruinous, and ill-conducted War; and from the idea that some other such wretched half measure may, under somewhat similar circumstances, be again adopted\*. Such a plan would not correct, but perpetuate abuses; for the few independent voices that might be added to the Legislature could never struggle against the general corruption, and yet the little that was granted would furnish a further argument against granting any more. Much better then, I think, had we remain under our present mock Representation, for a few years longer, than suffer ourselves to be lulled into a deceitful security. I hope then, Sir, that the genuine Friends of the People will shun this extreme with no less care than the other, and that they will not support, by their well-acquired reputation, the wily projects which the Minister may be compelled to adopt. This language may, I am afraid, Sir, appear somewhat violent, and I must acknowledge that some late transactions, and in particular Mr. Pitt's declaration that the King's Prerogative goes to the Introduction of Foreign Merce-

\* When the Earl of Chatham, in an early part of the present reign, first threw out the idea that a Reform in our Representation was necessary, he suggested that the addition of a Member to each County in England would be a proper remedy to the evil complained of. At a more advanced period of this reign, Lord Lansdown, then the King's Principal Minister, obtained a promise that an addition of fifty County Members should be admitted. But at the still later period of 1794, doubtless those two great Statesmen and sincere Friends of Liberty would have owned the insufficiency of those measures, and with the Editor's enlightened Friend would have contended for a more extensive Reform, as necessary to content the People, and to give permanent security to their endangered Rights.

naries, without the previous consent of Parliament, have so awakened my feelings that I find it difficult to speak with coolness.

In your pamphlet, Sir, you seem to defer the Shortening of the Duration of Parliament (p. 25) to an after period. I have always considered it as the corner-stone of Reform, and thought that any Reform would be imperfect that did not go to the immediate repeal of the Septennial, I will even say to a further abridgment of Parliament's duration than was established by the Triennial Act. I cannot judge of the reasons which have made you throw it into the back ground. Is there not also, Sir, some objection to the extending of the Elective Franchise to respectable Householders in the Metropolis and some large Cities, and withholding it from the other respectable Householders in the Kingdom? Actuated, as I am sure you are, by motives of public utility only, you will excuse these doubts in one who proposes to himself the same ends, though with less power of judging of the means by which they will be best attained. The Ministerial alarm continues in force, particularly among the Higher Orders of Society. With them, a jealousy of the designs of the Minister passes for Disaffection to the Throne; and a wish for Peace, for an approbation of French Principles, and a desire to introduce into this Country the destructive Anarchy which desolates France.

Believe me, Sir,

Very sincerely your's,

JOHN RALPH FENWICK.

P. S. Mr.

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P. S. Mr. Thomas Bigge is now, I believe, quite recovered.

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### LETTER III.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to J. R. FENWICK,  
Esq; M. D.*

BURTON-BALL, March 8th, 1794.

My Dear Sir,

ON reading your obliging letter of the 3d inst. I felt mortified at not having explained my meaning with sufficient clearness in the Pamphlet on the State of our Representation. To avoid unnecessary repetition, as it appeared to me, and the tediousness of being too minute, nothing was recapitulated in the Edition which you have seen, but the changes proposed in the Representation. The other parts of the plan of Reformation were not included in the *joint Representation*, at page 14. On reading the Pamphlet over lately, in order to correct it for a third Edition, this omission struck me as a considerable fault in such a piece; and I was anxious before I found that what was proposed respecting the extensions of the Right of Suffrage had been misunderstood by you, to set this point in a clearer light, by including it in the joint Recapitulation. This has been done accordingly, and in a few days I expect to receive some copies of the Third Edition thus corrected, when I shall take an early opportunity to transmit to you some of these corrected copies.—You will

then find the extension of the Right of Suffrage to all decent Householders throughout Great Britain expressly recapitulated at page 14, and the whole number of the additional Voters estimated at 350,000. But the different additions which would produce so great an augmentation of the Constituent Body may also be found in the 1st and 2d Editions, a few pages before. And though I blame myself very much for not having better guarded the proposal from being misunderstood in so essential a part of it, it is now a satisfaction to me to think, as I do with confidence, that in this respect your objections will be wholly removed.

With respect to the repeal of the Septennial Bill, I consider *that* as a measure of absolute necessity, as a powerful corrective of the spirit of corruption, and an indispensable vindication of our injured Constitution. But there is a specious argument urged against it by Lord J. Cavendish, and many other worthy Whigs, that till the influence of the Crown be first reduced, more frequent Elections would only ruin the independent families, and increase the dependence of Parliament. I should be glad to obtain a shorter duration of Parliaments, even annual, without much caring whether it were the first measure in order of succession or the last. But since there are these scruples, it seems proper to respect them so far as to place the measure in that situation as the last in order of time, which alone can make it acceptable to many worthy men; still, however, I conceive that all these measures  
should

should be considered as parts of the same plan, and if possible to be passed in the same Session of Parliament.

Less than what I have stated, I think, would not satisfy the People, and I think it ought not. But General Union can alone prevent their being shuffled off with some half measure, yet not by the present Minister, for he will give them nothing. I think his conduct more and more detestable; but a sudden change of men or measures probably would not tend to promote the Cause of Reformation.

I am, with great esteem,

My dear Sir,

\* Very sincerely your's,

C. WYVILL.

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#### LETTER IV.

*From* THOMAS BIGGE, Esq; *to the* Rev.

C. WYVILL.

BENTON, Jan. 13<sup>th</sup>, 1794.

Sir,

**I** DELAYED acknowledging the favour of your very obliging letter till the arrival of the pamphlets you were so kind as to promise me therein, respecting Mr. Pitt's Plan of Parliamentary Reformation. I have received them safe, and according to your desire have trans-

\* To this explanatory letter no reply by Dr. Fenwick was received by the Editor; at least, his reply, if any was received, has not been preserved. At an interview, not long after the date of this letter, the Editor had the pleasure to find his explanation was satisfactory to his Friend.

mitted

mitted a copy to Sir F. Blake and Mr. Selby of Chesters.

After a very attentive perusal of this publication, I can truly affirm, that I highly approve of the spirit in which it is written, and of the line of conduct which it recommends. Mr. Pitt's Plan, taken by itself, were it even to be immediately adopted, neither could nor ought to content the People under their present circumstances; a more complete and effectual Reform seems to be absolutely necessary as a remedy for exilling disorders, and a just security for the enjoyment of our invaded privileges; but that Plan, with your judicious Propositions annexed, presents so fair an object to my mind, that I confess (though I could wish to see it a little extended in some particulars) I should be well satisfied to see it executed without delay, in confidence that the immediate benefits arising from so constitutional a change might save our Country from the shock of a Revolution, by contenting the great mass of the People, who, seldom complaining without reason, generally desist from their complaints upon suitable redress, and by disarming certain very able Writers of those popular arguments which public distress already impending over us will enable them to wield with most certain effect. In as much as your Plan tends by a prudent compromise to rescue the People from the disastrous necessity of putting forth their enormous strength in vindication of their impaired Liberties, it must have the concurrence of all those who are sincere Friends to Freedom and Peace.

To

To me, indeed, the immediate adoption of it would also be highly acceptable on other grounds, as introducing such a change in the Government of this Country as would qualify many thousands of our Fellow-Citizens for the enjoyment of Rights which hereafter might be safely extended to them, but from the exercise of which they are, at present, incapacitated by the hard circumstances of their condition, lamentable to themselves, injurious to the Public, and disgraceful to a Free and Protestant State. I therefore honestly think that your late publication, like your former ones, is admirably adapted to the present most delicate and peculiar crisis of our affairs, tending as it does to recall men from the extremes of Despotism (which is at all times execrable) and of Democracy, (which would be at the present time dangerous) to a Constitutional Standard, erected on solid ground.

Proceed then, Sir, amidst the gratulations of Honest Men, and the revilings of Apostates, in the course you have so judiciously chosen and so consistently pursued; continue to silence the pensioned Adversaries, and to encourage the too-timid Friends of Political Reformation; awaken good men to the dangers of their Country; attempt again and again, with a zeal that cannot be questioned, and with arguments which must ultimately prevail, to disabuse an oppressed, insulted, and deluded People. The safety, the salvation of the Commonwealth depends upon the vigorous exertions of the Friends of temperate Reform at this very moment. The continuance of a  
War

War already marked on our part by a repeated breach of justice and the laws of Nations; by cruelty, treachery, and deceit; by gross ignorance, and convicted prodigality; attended hitherto by ignominy and defeat, and which may be attended hereafter by the desertion of our Associates, the ruin of our Dutch Ally, and the ultimate superiority of Republican valour, is surely of all things most earnestly to be deprecated, from the fatal consequences which (under a perseverance in abuses) it will certainly produce.

I am happy to hear that your Papers and Correspondence, &c. are in such forwardness. The public curiosity is alive, and every thing upon this subject seems to be read with increasing avidity. With every good wish for the success of your patriotic labours, I remain,

Sir,

Your obliged humble servant,

THOMAS BIGGE.\*

\* The Editor's acknowledgments are due to his worthy Friend, Thomas Bigge, Esq; for his consent to the publication of his letters, and he pays them with a grateful pleasure, which is much enhanced by the kindness of the reason which induced him to grant it. The Editor is happy in the opportunity which this publication affords him to express his high esteem of the talents, the virtues, and especially the enlightened and persevering patriotism of Mr. Bigge. He and his friend, J. R. Fenwick, Esq; can only be classed, with justice, among the foremost of our Reformers, who, with an ardent zeal for the Rights and Freedom of the Community, and a generous scorn of every selfish view, unite the most cautious moderation, and the most anxious solicitude for the preservation of peace and order.

LETTER

## LETTER V.

*From* THOMAS BIGGE, Esq; *to the Rev.*

C. WYVILL.

BENTON, *March 11th, 1794.*

Sir,

A FEW weeks ago I was induced, by an attentive consideration of your excellent Statement in connexion with the peculiar circumstances of the Times, to write some Remarks upon the State of Parties, and the Means of effecting a Reconciliation between them\*. Of this little performance I shall beg of you to accept a few copies, which my Printer, Mr. Hodgson, will take care shall be left for you at Richmond, the beginning of next week, by the person who distributes his Newcastle Chronicle in that district. It will give me great pleasure to hear that you approve of this feeble attempt to warn our Fellow-Countrymen against the danger of embracing extreme opinions; and I shall feel no less pleasure in receiving the correction of

\* The Pamphlet of Mr. Bigge, here alluded to, was intitled, "Considerations on the State of Parties;" it was very generally praised as a composition by men too prejudiced to admit its doctrine. In the Editor's judgment it was the ablest piece which for many years had been written on our internal affairs, and undoubtedly the arguments which were offered to the Public, by their judicious Monitor, had a powerful effect. But for his admonitions, the infatuation of the People probably would have been more extensive, the numbers, and the irritation of the two extreme contending parties would have been increased, a more decisive tendency to Revolution would have been produced, and the most calamitous consequences might have become unavoidable. Such are the considerations which still reward the true Patriot, even in those cases in which complete success has been denied to his most meritorious efforts!

your

your maturer and more instructed judgment, if I have advanced any thing unfounded in fact, improbable in conjecture, or unconstitutional in principle.

In no period of our History were moderate men ever placed in a situation more embarrassing than at present. They see power and prerogative advancing with rampant strides, and yet the more timorous of them are afraid to oppose these advances with their ancient firmness, lest the violent Republicans should take advantage of their opposition, for the promotion of their own views.

The consequence of this unfortunate neutrality must be, that the unopposed progress of the higher powers in measures hostile to public freedom will, in the end, produce discontents which it will be impossible for the Court to neglect, or to redress without imminent hazard to the Constitution. The dilemma is terrific. But the more I reflect upon this, the more persuaded I am, that a strong and speedy declaration in favour of a temperate Reform would be the means of saving much bloodshed at present all over Europe, and of securing ourselves and posterity from the ruinous effects of political convulsion. Upon the present H. of C. or upon a H. of C. constituted as the present is, no true Patriot can place a just and conscientious reliance. A Polish Diet, environed by the bayonets of a Russian banditti, actually displays a more reluctant spirit of Freedom. A cruel, arbitrary, and hypocritical Faction, abusing the fairest and most

most sacred pretexts, anxious to aggrandize, and fearful to surrender its authority in exact proportion as that authority has been wantonly exercised; supported by followers, venal, submissive, corrupt, neither can nor ought long to enjoy, in perilous times, the rational unbought confidence of a free and enlightened People.

If confidence has been placed in them, it must be imputed to the most unworthy artifices; but confidence, founded on delusion, is the most dangerous of all supports: from its nature it cannot last long, and those who seek to create it cannot betray their own weakness and that of their cause, if they do not expose themselves to the weightier charge of acting from selfish and interested motives.

The late decisions of Parliament afford almost a demonstration that we now do not possess one real, effective, and stable security for Public Freedom. What have we left but the barren hope that the Nation is neither so ignorant nor so abject as to submit much longer to stratagem or usurpation? All seems to depend upon a speedy undeception of the People. Our existing frame of Government may then be preserved, and moderate remedies may be successful. If other circumstances are to be our lot, I trust that in a more advanced stage of calamity, British bosoms would again be warmed by the examples of those Ancestors who have so often delivered them; men to whom at all times "*periculosa Libertas visa est potior quieto servitio.*"—Excuse the warmth of youth upon a subject which  
forces

forces itself upon me in so interesting a light. The inquisition of the day might deem me seditious; but from your temperate and judicious Patriotism, I do not fear censure. †

I remain, Sir,

Your obliged and faithful servant,

THOMAS BIGGE.

Mr. Selby of Chesters, upon the receipt of your pamphlet desired me to make his best acknowledgments to you for so kind a mark of your attention.

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LETTER VI.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to THO. BIGGE, Esq.*

BURTON-HALL, March 16th, 1794.

Sir,

I HAVE received the favour of your obliging letter, and the packet you mentioned, containing 20 copies of your Considerations on the State of Parties. I thank you very sincerely for this valuable communication; I read your

† The spirit of moderation and of manly freedom which are so well blended in this letter, should never be separated. Without moderation, the personal character of the Patriot may be truly respectable; he may be active, able, and disinterested; but the tranquillity of his country will be endangered in proportion to the influence of his character, and the energy of his exertions. On the other hand, without manly vigour he will shrink at the first approach of danger: the encroachment of Monarchal Power at home, the invasion of a Military Usurper from abroad, will meet from him no opposition; and when this spiritless caution has become the character of a Nation, the Liberty of that Nation must soon sink, first perhaps oppressed by its Monarch, then for ever lost by foreign subjugation.

publication

publication with avidity, and with uninterrupted satisfaction; it will, I am convinced, do much good, and afford a powerful support to the cause of moderate Reformation. I wish the commendation bestowed on a passage quoted from one of my pamphlets had been better deserved; but who would not feel a pride and a pleasure even from the partiality of such a man? One omission I saw, with some regret, in the title-page, and I could almost venture to express a wish that it might be supplied in your next Edition. Your name prefixed would add weight to your book, which is so meritorious in its design, and so accurate in its execution, that it would reflect credit on the character of any man. But I beg pardon for this; I am sensible you may have reasons for withholding your name, of which I am ignorant. The copies I have will very soon be distributed in different parts of the North of Yorkshire, and at Leeds and Halifax; and if you wish a more extensive circulation in Yorkshire, Lancashire, Notts, Leicestershire, and Northamptonshire, I have Correspondents in those parts, and by their means could undertake with pleasure to assist you. This is a humble, but in the present state of things a necessary mode of exertion. The whole weight of Government, with that of all its powerful supporters, with their connections in every class and department is, (as I think you justly observe) constantly employed to discredit every virtuous effort in favour of Peace or Reform, while many of the People are either too selfish or too sluggish to feel any

any concern in the dispute, or to give any assistance to those who are labouring in behalf of the Public with the most unquestionable integrity and benevolence; but the opposition of power in such cases is always to be expected; and it is not from the gratitude of the People, as I dare say you have felt, that the Patriot is to look for his reward.

I am, Sir, with great esteem,

Your most obliged,

C. WYVILL.

P. S. I heard with great concern of your accident, by which you had the misfortune to break your leg, and I have lately heard with equal joy from Dr. Fenwick, that you are perfectly recovered.

## LETTER VII.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to SHELDON  
CRADOCK, Esq.*

BURTON-HALL, Jan. 12th, 1794.

My Dear Sir,

**I** AM well satisfied in my own conscience with what I have done; but yet it is a great comfort and a great encouragement to receive the approbation of Friends, whom I highly respect for their enlightened love of Liberty, their attachment to the Constitution, and their steady perseverance in the support of that best of Causes here below \*, on the true

\* Respecting this world and its concerns, the Editor conceives it may be truly asserted that the cause of Political Reform, conducted on the equitable principles of the Constitution, and restrained

true grounds of Law and Moderation. While such are our principles and conduct, we may be repulsed, but never defeated; we may be slandered, abused, and ridiculed, but we can never be deprived of what is most to be valued upon earth, the united testimony of a good conscience, and the esteem of worthy friends. With you and others of our old Associates, I shall be ready to stand forth on these grounds when the proper time may, if it ever will, arrive. But I much fear the increasing violence of the two extreme contending parties will too much discourage those prudent Lovers of Liberty, from whose assistance alone we can hope to do any good.

I am ever, dear Sir,

Your's very cordially,

C. WYVILL.\*

P. S. I think we may expect great heats in the approaching Session of Parliament; but the Minister will be supported; we have not yet suffered enough to be undeceived; we shall submit to heavy Taxes, and incur more for the year to come.

Strained by moderation and a due submission to law, is the best of causes. But his meaning will be misrepresented, if it shall be stated that he has given that preference to Political Reform, compared with the cause of Virtue and Religion. Their paramount superiority he feels to the bottom of his heart, and the expressions in this letter ought not to be taken in a contrary sense.

\* The letter of S. Cradock, Esq; to which this letter was the Editor's answer, has been preserved; but the consent of his worthy Friend and Associate to publish it was not requested, lest the bulk of this Volume should be swelled by needless repetitions. In this Number several other instances occur of valuable letters suppressed for a similar reason.

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LETTER

## LETTER VIII.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to GAMALIEL  
LLOYD, Esq.*

BURTON-HALL, Jan. 15th, 1794.

My Dear Sir,

**I** RETURN you many thanks for your kind assistance in distributing the copies of my new Pamphlet sent some time ago, and your obliging readiness to distribute the larger packet, which I hope before this time you have received. It will give me much pleasure if you should be able to tell me that they have had a good effect in Suffolk and your neighbouring County of Norfolk, where I apprehend the parties in the two opposite extremes are as numerous as in any other part of England.

I have little hope that what I have said in confutation of Mr. Young will undeceive many of your Suffolk Associations, who have so rashly committed themselves by their eager praises of his book. And yet I am not without hope that some among them may have the candour to be convinced, and to own their conviction, that his book contains doctrines of the most pernicious tendency, and ought not to have received their sanction in the unqualified terms which some of the Associations have used. But of the zealous Friends of Reform in Suffolk, of whose approbation you express much doubt, I am inclined to entertain better hopes; chiefly, indeed, from having so long experienced the  
great

great candour and prudence of our excellent Friend Mr. Lofft. He sees, as you and I do, that the animosities of the two extreme contending parties threaten great calamity or ruin of different sorts, as popular licentiousness or despotism may prevail, and, with us, he wishes that some conciliatory plan may be adopted in time, for the sake of general peace and harmony. In these views I hope he will be joined by the Friends of Reform in Suffolk; and I shall be happy if what I have written with this very design of promoting an accommodation on terms advantageous to the People, shall assist him in any degree to effect his purpose. I took Mr. Pitt's Plan as the groundwork of my Publication, because in struggling with Mr. Pitt, now avowedly hostile to Political Reformation, the People will have a great advantage from proposing what does not materially differ from his own plan; and because so many considerable persons and bodies of men had expressed their approbation of it, that I thought it would not be prudent to change our ground and adopt measures which would be less likely to conciliate.

A Reform on the principle laid down by the precedents of Cricklade and Shoreham, if that principle were strictly adhered to, would be little or no benefit to the Public; but if the Reform were conducted on that principle, but with the latitude which you propose, I agree with you in thinking it would be a better Plan of Reformation, but it would be less likely, I think, to be accepted as the ground of conciliation, because it would amount to an

entire, or nearly an entire new modelling of the whole frame of our Representation. \* If we put our terms of accommodation too high, we shall fail to accommodate; but if we secure a considerable advantage to the Popular Cause by proposing terms even somewhat lower than might be carried, the People may hereafter (that is, after due experience and trial of what may have been obtained) with greater ease accomplish still greater improvements, and ultimately attain Universal Suffrage itself.

I am ever, my dear Sir,  
Your's, with great truth and sincerity,  
C. WYVILL.

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#### LETTER IX.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to CAPEL LOFFT,  
Esq.*

BURTON-HALL, Jan. 16th, 1794.

My Dear Sir,

**I** SHALL certainly feel myself extremely obliged to you for taking the trouble to circulate a Publication which is written partly with

\* It is fit that the plan of the Editor's worthy Correspondent should be stated in his own words. "After all, every one naturally prefers his own scheme: and considering practicability, the temper of the times, and of our present Members of Parliament, I should be glad to see my own imperfect sketch attempted. I am convinced that were the Boroughs laid open to the Freeholders of the adjoining Hundreds, and were the number of Representatives abridged, where the Boroughs lie too near each other, as is the case of Knaresborough, Ripon, Boroughbridge, Aldborough, and Thirsk, and the right of Suffrage transferred to Districts that contain

with a view to vindicate my character from the aspersions of your unhappy neighbour. But my principal motive for drawing it up was, and I hope will appear to you, and to the world, to have been my dread of the fatal consequences which too probably may result from the violence of the extreme contending parties among us, and my earnest wish to promote an accommodation by holding out a proposal of Reform, which would be very advantageous to Liberty, though still acknowledged to be far short of a perfect Plan of Reformation, and which would operate in the mildest manner, and without injury to any individual.—Happy shall I be, if this feeble endeavour of mine can in any degree contribute to so good an end. But should it prove altogether unsuccessful, I am so thoroughly persuaded of the dangers above described, and of the urgent necessity for a speedy conciliation, that I can truly assure you I enjoy the most heartfelt satisfaction from what I have done, and the misrepresentations and angry invectives to which my conduct has exposed me, (and more I must now expect) have never for a moment disturbed my peace of mind. I shall be happy to hear this Publication is approved by the Friends of Reform in Suffolk, over whom I hope your candour and prudence will have the influence it ought to have ;

contain no Boroughs, this would be such a Reform as would be attended with every salutary effect, which the Friends of Rational Liberty, and of Peace and Order, could wish for." The Editor has here inserted this extract from Mr. Lloyd's letter of January the 3d, 1794, without the express leave of his Friend, conceiving himself to be sufficiently assured of his approbation.

if therefore my proposal for progressive improvement and the gradual attainment of Universal Suffrage, by peaceful means, but at some future period which is probably at no small distance, should meet your approbation in the present critical and dangerous state of the Country, I flatter myself your concurrence may induce many even of the Friends of Universal Suffrage to concur also, and thus a great additional security to Public Liberty may be gained, and the means may be furnished to the next or a succeeding generation to carry our Representative Government to the highest pitch of perfection, without exposing the country, either now or hereafter, to the shock, the tremendous shock, of a Revolution. I am less sanguine in hoping this small piece can make any extensive impression on those Associations in Suffolk who have so rashly given the most unqualified praise to Mr. Young's book, replete as it is with doctrine which tends to subvert the Constitution which those Loyal Meetings hold in such high admiration. From many letters lately received from the Counties of Durham and Northumberland, and different parts of Yorkshire, I think, at a proper season, the party for Reformation may be united on the ground traced out in this Pamphlet.

I am ever, my dear Sir,

With great cordiality,

Your obliged Friend,

C. WYVILL.

LETTER

## LETTER X.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to SAMUEL SHORE,*  
Esq.

BURTON-HALL, Jan. 17th, 1794.

My Dear Sir,

**I**T gives me great pleasure to find that what I have proposed in addition to Mr. Pitt's Plan, appears to you to render that Plan a proper object for the People to contend for, and to be contented with, if obtained in the way of compromise and accommodation. That is to me a very material point; for I should certainly propose something more, or at least I should think something more might well be proposed by the People, if this country should be so unfortunate as to run into confusion. But God forbid it should, It behoves all wise and good men to exert themselves to the utmost to prevent it, and that soon; for ill humour is increasing fast among the People, in Scotland especially, from whence I hear to-day reports of a tumult in Edinburgh, and the Lord Provost's house being set fire to. I sent your worthy friend and neighbour, Mr. Wilkinson, half a dozen copies; I wish he may approve; but I fear his mind is too much depressed yet to relish altogether what I have said. I still less expect it will be relished by the warm Reformers in Sheffield, who are apparently too impetuous to listen to the counsels of cool and cautious men. And yet, in this respect I may be mistaken, and I should rejoice to find it. To

you and to Mr. Wilkinson it must be ascribed, if moderate counsels should finally prevail at Sheffield. With respect to many of our old Friends, who never had Mr. Wilkinson's zeal for Civil or Religious Liberty, it must be supposed they are far more unwilling to hear of any thing like a persuasive to active measures, even on the most unexceptionable grounds, and in some instances I have found it. And I believe all I have said to lessen their fears, by declaring not only against Paine and those Associations who have commended his book, but even against Williams and Cooper, will be little enough to produce the effect intended.

I wish what is said of the two last may not produce any of the unfavourable effects you seem to apprehend. Had I not thought it necessary to say it in order to conciliate others, I certainly should have omitted the passage altogether, especially as you expressed a wish that I should be cautious. But feeling it necessary to say something to mark my disapprobation of the spirit and tendency of their writings, I think I could not well express it with less offence to those Gentlemen. I am rather inclined to think neither of them will deny the tendency of their writings. *That* is the passage altered in consequence of your letter; it is more reserved than it stood before. I have the pleasure to find that what I have said is much approved by some principal Friends of the Cause in Durham and Northumberland.

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Should your Society relish the ideas I have thrown out, it would be difficult, I think, for Mr. Pitt to resist. I hope I shall have the pleasure of hearing from you again before you go up, which I suppose will be soon.

I am ever, my dear Sir,

Most cordially your's,

C. WYVILL.

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LETTER XI.

From CAPEL LOFFT, Esq; to the Rev,

C. WYVILL.

April 12th. 1794.

Dear Sir,

I INCLOSE an account, as near as I can recollect it, of what passed at a Meeting at Newmarket last Thursday se'nnight.\*

I think that I owe particularly to you an account of my conduct in what respects the Public, and of the grounds of it.

With the exprefs condition of the previous sanction of Parliament to every specific object to which the subscription should be applicable, I thought it a measure not unconstitutional, and in the present emergency I considered it as expedient. The necessity of the previous sanction of Parliament, as a condition to the raising and applying of any part of the subscription, I had urged at the Assize Dinner, and

\* This account has been preserved, but it is not inserted among the Preliminary Papers, because the conduct of Mr. Capel Lofft, on the occasion alluded to, does not appear to require farther explanation.

and had the satisfaction of finding it there adopted in express terms in the title to the subscription then conditionally made. You will see how the same idea was received at the Newmarket Meeting.

Our Friends here, I mean at Bury and its neighbourhood, blame my conduct as unconstitutional and inconsistent, and even as implying an approbation of the War, though I have taken every possible pains to negative such idea in the most explicit and public manner, and that repeatedly, and I trust it is neither unconstitutional, nor any way inconsistent.

It strikes me that if the Friends of Peace in expressing their desire of this Nation being withdrawn from the War, were to express at the same time their willingness and determination to concur in the Internal Defence, and in that solely against the interference of a *foreign* force, they would act most consistently, and, as far as our circumstances will admit, with the greatest prospect of acting efficaciously.

I am most desirous to co-operate at all times, by all regular and Constitutional means, to promote Peace, and an immediate termination of this, in every sense, destructive War; and I believe you will think it agreeable to these sentiments that I should wish, while the War most unhappily continues, the Public to be prepared, and, as much as possible, united against Invasion.

I remain, dear Sir,

Your obliged friend,

CAPEL LOFFT.

## LETTER XII.

From the Rev. C. WYVILL to CAPEL LOEFF,  
Esq.

BURTON-HALL, April 21, 1794.

My Dear Sir,

**I** RETURN you many thanks for the obliging communication of the Debate and Resolutions at the late Meeting of the County of Suffolk.

With respect to the proposed augmentation of our internal force for the Defence of the Country, my sentiments accord entirely with yours. However the War may deserve to be reprobated by all who respect the Rights of Nations, or who feel any attachment to the General Cause of Liberty, yet, when the Executive Government of the Country proclaims that we are threatened with an Invasion, and, with the concurrence of Parliament, calls on the People in their several Districts to arm for the Protection of the Country, I see not on what ground the requisition can be resisted. On this principle, at a late Meeting at Northallerton, of the Magistrates and Deputy-Lieutenants of this Riding of Yorkshire, the measures proposed by Earl Fauconberg for increasing our means of Internal Defence were agreed to by the Meeting without any opposition. But when the means of defraying the expences of the various augmentations agreed to came under the consideration of the Meeting, \* I thought it right to resist a General Subscription

\* The proposal of Earl Fauconberg, Lord Lieutenant of the North-Riding of Yorkshire to the Meeting at Northallerton, on the

Subscription at the Instance of a Secretary of State, and made the following Motions :

1st, Resolved, That the right to originate all Supplies for the Public Service belongs exclusively to the House of Commons.\*

the 3d of April, 1794. to raise money by subscription for the Public Service, was made under authority from Mr. Secretary Dundas.—A copy of the document by which his Lordship was authorized to risque that proposal was previously communicated to the Magistrates, &c. of the Riding by the Clerk of the Peace, and it is here preserved, with the letter which accompanied it. The Paper here copied was preceded by "A Plan of Augmentation of the Forces for Internal Defence."

### GENERAL SUBSCRIPTION.

WHITE-HALL, *March 14th, 1794.*

It is naturally to be supposed that Gentlemen of weight or property in different parts of the Kingdom will separately stand forward in order to carry into execution the several parts of the Plan for the security of the Country: but it seems also desirable a General Subscription should be opened to be applied under the direction of a Committee, for the purpose of assisting in carrying into execution all or any of the measures therein suggested, as circumstances shall appear to require.

Letter from W. WAILES, Esq; Clerk of the Peace, &c.

(CIRCULAR.)

Rev. Sir,

The other half contains copies of the plans for augmenting the forces for the Internal Defence of the Kingdom, received from Mr. Secretary Dundas by Earl Fauconberg, which by the directions of his Lordship I send you, that you may have an opportunity of perusing them previous to the Meeting advertised to be held at Mr. Hirst's, the third of next month, for taking the same into consideration.

I am, Sir, your most obedient servant,

WILL. WAILES,

*Noriballerton, 27th March, 1794.*

To the Rev. C. Wyvill.

\* This proposition is incontestable. The exclusive privilege of the House of Commons to originate the Public Supplies is the Corner-Stone of the Constitution; and no case, but that of the most evident and urgent necessity, can be supposed to justify any measure

2d, Resolved, That a Requisition from the Executive Government of this Country, unfashioned by the previous authority of Parliament, to raise Supplies in any way for the Public Service, is irregular, and ought to be discountenanced by this Meeting.

The 2d proposition, conveying a direct censure of Ministers for the proposal of a Subscription, could not be rendered agreeable to the sense of the Meeting by any amendment which I could give it. But on withdrawing the 2d proposition, the 1st was agreed to, and no Subscription took place. But though from this statement of my conduct you may perceive it to have been different from yours, you will not class me, I hope, with those who blame your having yielded to the measure of Subscription under the limitations you proposed, and who seem to have treated you with a degree of severity which appears to me to have been unmerited. I do not think there is any evident and cogent necessity which justifies our Government in calling for private aids and benevolence; but in a case of great and evident necessity, such aids, in my opinion, would be perfectly justifiable, under the limi-

measure of Government which tends to infringe, or invalidate that inestimable privilege. In 1794 the danger of Invasion did not appear to be great or impending, yet the Secretary of State ventured to apply to County Meetings, through the Lord Lieutenant to raise money for the Public Service by Subscriptions. The irregularity was resisted with success in Yorkshire, and other parts of the Kingdom, chiefly by those persons who had been calumniated as the enemies of the Constitution. In 1803, when the War with France had broken out afresh, and the threats of Invasion were incomparably more alarming, the New Ministers respected the principles of the Constitution, and properly left Subscription to the unsolicited zeal of private Individuals.

tation

tation of a Parliamentary sanction which you have laid down. The only difference therefore between you and me, on this subject, relates merely to the degree of necessity now existing for such aids so demanded. In case of an Invasion, or the actual appearance of danger of an Invasion, I think I should not refuse to subscribe on your terms.

I am ever, with great esteem,

Dear Sir, your obliged friend,

C. WYVILL.

### LETTER XIII.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to Mr. WILLIAM HEAD.*

BURTON-HALL, May 8th, 1794.

My Dear Sir,

I HAVE been told by several Friends that my conduct at the Meeting at Northalberton, on the 3d of April last, has been much misunderstood in the Country, that I am supposed either to have proposed or supported the recommendation of the Meeting, that the augmentations of Internal Force agreed to, should be paid for by a Rate upon the Riding; and that in consequence of this erroneous supposition many Freeholders and respectable Farmers have expressed their disapprobation of my conduct at that Meeting, with no small degree of resentment.—I shall be much obliged, therefore, to you, and to every other Friend, who will take the trouble to contradict

dict this report, and to state my conduct such as it really was, wherever you may find it to have been misunderstood.

The proposal for paying the expences of the augmentations agreed to, by a Rate on the Riding, was first suggested by Earl Fauconberg, and afterwards proposed to the Meeting as the Motion of Mr. Burton Fowler. The part I took respecting this measure, when first suggested by Lord Fauconberg, and afterwards moved by Mr. Fowler, was to oppose it; and my opposition to it went upon these grounds, 1st, that it would be a partial and unjust Tax; 2d, that it would be unpopular in the Country; 3d, and that an augmentation of the North-Riding Militia having been agreed to, it would be improper to pay for the men to be added to the North-Riding Regiment in a different mode from that by which the expence attending the Regiment itself was paid.

What I proposed to the Meeting was as follows:

1. That the right to originate all Supplies for the Public Service belongs exclusively to the House of Commons.
2. That a Requisition from the Executive Government of this Country, unsanctioned by the previous authority of Parliament, to raise supplies, in any way, for the Public Service, is irregular, and ought to be discountenanced by this Meeting.

The first of these propositions, after a good deal of debate, was adopted by the Meeting,  
nearly

nearly with unanimity. — The second was objected to, upon which I amended it as follows: That it is the opinion of the Meeting, that any expences which may be incurred by Government, for increasing the means of the Internal Defence of the Nation at large, ought to be defrayed out of the National purse.

This proposition was connected with that marked on the other half sheet, as No. 1, and both were moved together by me, and the Motion was seconded by Mr. Chaytor; but the amended proposition being still unpalatable to the Meeting, it was given up; and the proposition marked 1, being moved in a separate state, was then adopted, as I have mentioned above, nearly with unanimity, and connected with the Motion made by Mr. Burton Fowler.

Such was my conduct on the 3d of April, and I trust, that, thus explained it will be satisfactory to the Freeholders who have complained of it, merely from misinformation.

I am, my dear Sir,

Sincerely your's,

C. WYVILL.

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LETTER XIV.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to the Rev.  
WILLIAM WOOD.*

BURTON-HALL, June 24th, 1794

My Dear Sir,

**I** HAVE to thank you for two very obliging letters, and for the kind assistance of your Friends,

Friends, who, at your desire, have circulated my Pamphlets. \* With how little effect those Pamphlets have been written, though very diligently circulated in many parts of the Kingdom, our present dangerous situation too plainly proves. But mortifying as the conviction is, that my well-intended admonitions have scarcely had any perceivable influence on the heated minds of our Popular Societies; and, in all appearance, still less on those of the haughty Aristocracy, who now govern England with a rod of iron; yet, I do assure you my spirits are not depressed, nor my resolution one whit abated; on the contrary, I find a fresh source of courage in the approbation of many wise and good men; I feel myself strong in their support, and still more, in the perfect serenity and composure of an approving conscience, which I trust in God will bear me up in any adversity which may befall me.

I should have thanked you before this time, my dear Sir, for the encouraging letters I have lately received from you; but have been a good deal hurried by temporary, unforeseen, and unpleasant business, which I will explain as briefly as I can.

My opposition to the Minister's Plan of Subscription, in April last, had been in part successful; but soon after my return home, I was informed

\* This eminent Dissenting Minister has long been fixed at Leeds, where, notwithstanding the peculiar difficulties of his station, he is held in high esteem. He is a man of a very amiable and respectable character, a Friend to Learning and Virtue, to Rational Religion and Moderate Reform. His kind regard and partiality to the Editor have been often experienced, and never can be forgotten by him.

informed by several Friends, that the Farmers and lower Freeholders were much enraged at me, on a supposition that I had suggested or supported the proposal of paying for the intended augmentations of force, in this Riding, by a Rate upon it, in the nature of a County Rate. By letters read at principal Markets, and by the assistance of Friends, the Farmers were convinced of their mistake, and understood, that, in fact, I had opposed this motion. But when a General Meeting of the Riding was called, at the instance of Government, dissatisfied with the Resolutions of April 3d, I found that the Farmers and others began again to throw out menaces of personal insult, if I went to oppose Subscription. I thought these rumours of intended outrage too vague for some time to deserve any notice. I determined to attend the Meeting on the 12th instant, and in pursuance of the advice of a Friend, I put down on paper the heads of my intended speech against Benevolence, and in favour of Peace, with a copy of a Resolution, recommending Peace, as soon as it could be effected on terms of honour to this Country, and safety to its Allies, to be placed in a Friend's hand, to guard against misrepresentation, having reason to believe my words would be watched, taken down, and sent to Mr. Dundas. But on the 11th, the day before the Meeting, I received authentic information that I could not go with personal safety. Threatened with insult and mobbing, I thought it right to desist; and I hope my caution will have convinced the most prejudiced

diced, that I am far from meaning either to inflame heats, or to contend with enthusiastic vehemence, for what I may think the interest of the Public. But with firmness, with honest and persevering zeal, I will contend in a temperate and rational way; and in this way I trust the Friends of the Public will at last succeed. \*

I beg to be kindly remembered to Dr. B. Dawson, whose ancient friendship for me I still feel with pleasure. I am glad he approves my conduct, and that I have found the means of communicating to him some of my papers.

I rejoice, my dear Sir, at your recovery, and wish you a long continuance of good health.

I remain cordially your's,

C. WYVILL.

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## LETTER XV.

*From* MATTHEW ROBINSON, Esq; *to the* Rev.  
C. WYVILL.

HORTON, near HYTHE, 7th June, 1794.

MR. ROBINSON has lately received a copy of Mr. Wyvill's Publication, intitled "A State of the Representation," &c.  
N 2 from

\* Upon this occasion it was at first apprehended by the Editor and his Friends, that the absurd and unprovoked resentment of the lower classes of Freeholders never could have been blown up to such a height of fury without the help of Instigators of a superior rank. But after diligent inquiry, no trace of any suggestion of insult

from the outside cover of which it appears to have been sent him by order of the Author. Mr. R. was highly flattered with this compliment and present from one whose character and conduct he so much respects, although he has not the honour of any personal acquaintance with him. Mr. R. had before read over the book, and has done so again since, both times with very great pleasure and approbation. The plan is temperate and moderate, but would certainly be effectual if carried into execution. He sincerely and earnestly wishes Mr. W. success in his designs and proceedings for the public good: that matter, however, appears in the present times very problematical and doubtful; but Mr. R. wishes, likewise, Mr. W. health and life, that he may, at all events, long enjoy the comfort and satisfaction arising from his endeavours to serve his country and mankind.

sult and personal outrage upon the Editor was found; and the supposition was therefore dismissed as a groundless apprehension. But though he acquits his calumniators, as not guilty of having instigated certain ignorant men to acts of violence against him, yet their injurious calumnies and the gross epithets which they allowed themselves freely to apply to him in hand-bills, &c. may justly be considered as having contributed to inflame the rage of those persons to the degree here stated. At this distance of time the calumnies and injurious epithets alluded to require no further notice; they may well be consigned to oblivion with satisfaction, such as the Warrior would feel when he committed to the flames the pointless spears and arrows of the foes he had repulsed.

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LETTER XVI.

From the Rev. C. WYVILL to MATTHEW  
ROBINSON, Esq.

BYTON-HALL, June 16th, 1794.

Sir,

I AM happy to find, from your obliging letter of the 7th instant, that my public conduct continues to meet your approbation, and particularly that the plan of Reformation, which I have suggested in my last Pamphlet, on the State of the Representation, is in your opinion a plan which is at once moderate, yet effectual to correct the gross abuses which time, and the fraudulent arts of many of our principal families have accumulated to a degree which at present renders our House of Commons little better than a mock Representative of the People. Tho' I ventured to propose some addition to the plan formerly agreed to by the County of York, and afterwards adopted by Mr. Pitt, and proposed by him to Parliament, yet I have no reason to think the Yorkshire Gentlemen dislike the additional propositions; or, at what they think a proper time, would hesitate to give them their support. But at present many of my old Friends are so much alarmed by the supposed danger of French principles, for which I fear the indiscreet zeal of some Popular Meetings has given but too much reason, that I do not perceive any probability of a general union of the County of York in favour of Political Reformation till that alarm has sub-

sided, or is overcome by the opposite, and, in my opinion, much more threatening danger, from the apparent disposition in the upper classes of society to seek their safety under the shelter of despotic power, which is the infatuation of the man who rushed into the lion's den to avoid a few noisy curs barking at his heels.

I hope, Sir, before you will receive this letter, you will have received a set of the collection of Political Papers which I have lately published, and which I request you to accept. I beg leave to return you my warm and most sincere thanks for the many kind expressions of esteem in your letter; and though I find myself more persecuted by misrepresentation and calumny than at any former period of my life, yet when I reflect that I possess the esteem and good wishes of such men as you, the thought animates my heart, and I resolve afresh to support with increasing zeal, but with all due caution, that Cause of Civil and Religious Liberty which is at once the Cause of Reason, Virtue, and Religion.

I am, Sir,

With the greatest esteem,

Your most obliged,

and most obedient servant,

C. WYVILL.

LETTER

## LETTER XVII.

From MATTHEW ROBINSON, Esq; to the Rev.  
C. WYVILL.

HORTON, near HYTHE, 25<sup>d</sup> Sept. 1794.

Rev. Sir,

I DULY received your obliging letter of 16<sup>th</sup> June; I have likewise in your name lately received from Mr. Johnson your collection of Political Papers, with his excuses for not having sent them sooner. I beg you to accept my acknowledgments on both these accounts. However my sensations may have become weakened by an age of more than four score years, I remain very sensible of the favourable opinion of a person so deserving in himself.

The papers contain material lights and instructions for any persons who may desire to pursue the same purposes of a Parliamentary Reform. As you have already used such due endeavours for that end, I heartily wish it may one day be your own lot to renew again, at a proper opportunity, your attempt with success and effect. It will be both conferring a great benefit on mankind, and leaving a noble monument of yourself behind you.

I express therein, however, rather my wishes than my expectations. I verily believe that good forms of Government will by degrees in time spread and obtain throughout the whole civilised world; not, however, immediately, nor by dint or means only of public spirit, but from a more general knowledge

ledge and information of mankind concerning their individual interest. The many will then all move together one way, like the waves of the sea impelled by the same wind, and will be irresistible.

Power will nevertheless, right or wrong, endeavour in the mean-time to maintain its possessions. Bodies of men very seldom reform themselves, or willingly suffer others to do it for them. This must of course, and according to circumstances, cause more or less violence, contentions, revolutions, &c. Who knows how many stages and changes Great Britain herself may have to go through, before she arrives at that happy period; but which she might in all appearance so soon and so easily attain, if some persons in certain situations would only consent and concur.

It appears to me, I must confess, that another fate probably first attends our country. It has for many years been my firm, fixed, unchanged opinion (and I do certainly discern at this moment no grounds to alter it) that we are constantly moving towards a bankruptcy, sometimes slower, sometimes faster, sometimes full gallop, and whether it will happen a little sooner or later, and in war or in peace, who can in that case say the effects or issue of such an event? Some men might, however, perhaps see reason to repent that they refused to settle our Constitution by a temperate Reform, when they had so much and such good opportunity to do it.

No such considerations should nevertheless discourage or divert you from your endeavours.

vours. It is to be hoped that these things are only vain apprehensions; or be that as it may, we are taught that

*Justum & tenacem propositi virum,  
Si fractus illabatur orbis,  
Impavidum ferient ruinæ.*

The bankruptcy of a State is certainly not so terrible a circumstance as the bursting of a World, and the sense of a man's own good conduct will in any case be a very great comfort and satisfaction.

If I have trespassed upon you with too long a letter of politics, you will nevertheless be so good as to receive it for a mark of my regard and respect. I do not know your motions, nor whether you ever now come to the Metropolis; but should you either at Margate, or any other place, approach the meridian of Horton, you would make me very happy in visiting my hermitage for such time as might be convenient or agreeable to you, and where you may discourse with the same freedom as you think. \* I wish

\* In the character of this unchangeable Patriot, there might be some portion of harmless eccentricity. If his house might be called a hermitage, his figure, towards the close of his life, from the unusual growth of his beard, resembled that of a hermit. But they who were surprised by a personal appearance, so uncommon in this country, might have found in the valuable qualities of his mind, and his heart, matter for greater wonder. At a more advanced period of life, when, by the death of his brother, the Barony of Rokeby had devolved upon him, he wrote a Pamphlet in favour of Peace and Liberty, with very considerable ability. But, even his ability, at that great age, is not what ought most to excite our admiration. Other men have retained their intellectual powers to an age as great as his; but scarcely can the man be named, whose heart, after the friction of ninety revolving years, has continued to beat as sensibly alive to the feelings of philanthropy, as warm with zeal for the liberty and happiness of his countrymen, as the venerable Lord Rokeby's.

I wish you health and happiness, and am,  
with most sincere esteem,

Sir, your very obedient,

humble servant,

MATTHEW ROBINSON.

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LETTER XVIII.

*From* PETER JOHNSON, Esq; *to the Rev.*  
C. WYVILL.

Sir,

I RECEIVED, a few days ago from Mr. Todd, by your order, a repeated instance of your unmerited favour to me, by the communication of your collection of Political Papers in three volumes, for which, and your former favours of the like nature, I can only return you my very grateful thanks; assuring you that I very highly esteem the honour of being noticed by so respectable a character; and that though I have the misfortune to differ from you in opinion, as to the seasonableness of an application to Parliament at so dangerous a crisis, you will do me the justice to believe that I am actuated by the same public spirited principles which have so eminently influenced your conduct. With this hope and trust, I have the honour to subscribe myself,

Sir, Your obliged

and obedient servant,

P. JOHNSON.\*

*April 26, 1793.*

LETTER

\* This worthy Gentleman was cool, cautious, and of a candid character, uniformly preserved in times most unfavourably marked  
by

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to PETER JOHNSON,*  
Esq.

BURTON-HALL, *June 10th*, 1794.

Sir,

**I** HAVE received the favour of your letter, respecting my Publication of the Political Papers of the Yorkshire Committee, &c. which I took the liberty to send you, from my respect for your truly candid and public spirited character. There certainly are great discontents in the Country; and my opinion sincerely is, that the best way to avoid danger from those discontents is to put an end to our Foreign War, as soon as it can be possible, consistently with honour and good faith, and to adopt a system of moderate concession, or at least of lenient measures, with respect to the Internal affairs of this Country. Critical as our situation is, the harsh measures which our Government has for some time pursued seem to me likely to increase discontent, rather than to suppress it, and consequently to render our situation daily more critical, and more dangerous. Yet the objection you make is not only a very natural one, but it must be allowed to have great force. I do not pretend to say there is no danger or difficulty in what I think ought to be our line of conduct; I only say it strikes me as being far less dangerous than the line now pursued, and

by the contrary spirit. He was, too, a friend to Constitutional Liberty, though he forbore to co-operate with those persons in Yorkshire who had associated to effect the Reformation of Parliament. He was for many years Recorder of York, and much esteemed both as a Lawyer and a Man.

to

to the Minister it would have been a more consistent and a more honourable course. \*

I beg

\* This may require some explanation, and subsequent events afford the means. The Editor saw with concern, and he has frequently admitted, that, about this time, a party hostile to the Constitution, and eager for the introduction of a Republican Form of Government, had arisen in this Country. If Peace with the French Republic had been maintained or speedily restored; if a lenient system of Administration had been continued, and a temperate Reform of Parliament had been conceded, it is yet possible that the wisdom of Government might have failed to correct the prejudices, and to conciliate the affections of many who had embraced the dangerous doctrine of the Anglo-American Revolutionist.—Men of a deep, but irregular ambition, of a turbulent and gloomy enthusiasm, but still guided by interested motives, are produced in every age, and every country; no lenity, no generous frankness, no equity in the conduct of Government, will ever satisfy such men. From malecontents of this description, danger is always to be feared; the rage of a disbanded populace and their enormous crimes could not appall them; instead of shuddering at the horrors of a revolutionary struggle, then desolating France, such men could survey them with a savage satisfaction, and a preface of similar success to similar attempts in England, where some profligate men may always be found but too well prepared to follow any leader into scenes of carnage and plunder. Undoubtedly, at all times, it behoves Ministers vigilantly to watch the conduct of such men; but it was most necessary to watch, and if guilty of any crime, to punish the Missionaries of Anarchy and Confusion, when a fermentation had evidently been excited in the lower Orders of our Countrymen by the Revolution in France. But, for that reason also, it was their duty most cautiously to avoid every act of rigour beyond the bounds of Law, every stretch of power injurious to the Constitutional Rights of the Nation, and to abandon a system of foreign policy, which, if continued, would unavoidably increase the irritation complained of. Unhappily, the Minister adhered to his new system; and during the latter part of his administration he exercised his power with augmented rigour, which, combined with the pressure of taxes, and an extreme scarcity of provisions, had nearly driven the Nation to despair. The victories in the Baltic, and in Egypt, and the Peace of Amiens, which those events enabled the present Minister to conclude, snatched the Nation from the brink of Revolution. The Peace, indeed, has been of short duration; and the Nation is again called upon to sustain new burthens, and to make greater efforts in a War singly renewed against the gigantic power of France: yet has that Peace produced beneficial effects of high importance; it is felt to have been the concession of a Government which sympathized with the People,

and

I beg leave to add, that it is the greatest pleasure and satisfaction to me to find, from the very obliging expressions in your letter, that the rectitude of my intentions is approved by a Gentleman whom I so greatly esteem.

I am, &c.

C. WYVILL.

## LETTER XX.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to JOHN COURTNEY, Esq.*

BURTON-HALL, June 18th, 1794.

My Dear Sir,

**I** THINK with you and many of our friends that the times are become dangerous beyond any example since the Revolution. When Mr. Pitt issued the first Proclamation, I thought I saw an intention in Government to crush the rising discontent of the Country by rigorous measures, instead of endeavouring to allay it by conciliating ones; and I published the Defence of Dr. Price with a view to bring him back to more moderate councils, by shewing the probable progress of discontent under a system of prosecution and stern refusal of redress.

and willingly gratified their wish for repose. On the renewal of War, and the alarm of Invasion, the alacrity, the unanimity, the spirited eagerness of the People to arm to meet the foe, and to repel him, are the happy effects of that concession: they prove the advantage of that Peace, though transient, and the superior policy of a system of conciliation, which the present Cabinet have wisely preferred to the harsh and irritating system of their Predecessors.

When

When Mr. Pitt was on the point of engaging in a War with France, I thought I saw great probability that it would be a long and burthensome War, contrary to his assertion at that time in Parliament; and fearing that the distress of such a War, added to the existing discontents on Constitutional grounds, would increase animosities to the most hazardous extreme, I wrote my letter, stating my fears, and endeavouring to persuade him to return to his pacific system. The War continues, and is still likely to continue; and the rage of the opposite parties in England is more than ever inflamed. In this state of violence on the part of the People and their opponents, I thought one more attempt might be made to recommend to the People moderation in their demands, and to the great prudence to concede in time, while moderate concessions might probably secure lasting tranquility. With this view I published the Pamphlet on the Representation, but again without success. So extreme is the agitation of the public mind, so violent is the panic of the Great, that every day which passes without some event tending to excite commotion, and without information of commotion somewhere actually commenced, seems to be a day of good fortune happily gained for the Public.

As you, my dear Sir, love Liberty joined with Order, so do I. I blame the indiscretion (possibly it ought to be called the criminal rashness) of the Popular Societies; but Government ought to have foreseen that their  
severity

severity against the Proposers of Universal Suffrage, coupled with the former zeal of some of the Ministers for Parliamentary Reform, even on that principle, could only tend to excite this criminal spirit, and increase our danger. But while we blame both Government and the too eager and violent Sticklers for Reformation, and cannot but see reason to fear that a dreadful collision of opposite parties may take place, yet a moderate party there yet is, who deprecate the extremes of Government and of the Republican Faction, and who, I trust, are strong enough to prevent the impending mischiefs on either hand.

With this middle party I wish to act, and I shall never stand forward with any other views. I intreat you to accept the copy of my Collection of Papers, and to present my compliments and Mrs. Wyvill's to Mrs. Courtney.

I am, dear Sir,

Your's very cordially,

C. WYVILL.

## LETTER XXI.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to HENRY LEGARD,  
Esq.*

BURTON-HALL, *June 21<sup>st</sup>, 1794.*

Sir,

I REQUEST you will do me the favour to accept the Collection of Papers which has come to your hands, and which I took the liberty to send from respect to your political principles

principles and conduct, and in grateful acknowledgment of your candour, which I have so often experienced. I think the times dangerous in the extreme; but I cannot think that a reason for being ready to give up the principles of the Constitution. On the contrary, it appears to me that the dangers which now threaten us can only be avoided by a steady adherence to those principles, whether attacked by Ministers or Republican Societies. On that ground I trust, when the panic so artfully raised has subsided, and Reason has resumed her influence, that we shall find a great majority of our Countrymen are determined to support Liberty, and close a War which, if much longer pursued, can only end in driving the Nation into one of the extremes which now threaten us, viz. a Republican Revolution, or submission to the stern protection of Despotic Authority.

I am, Sir,  
Your much obliged  
and most obedient servant,  
C. WYVILL.

## LETTER XXII.

*From* JAMES MARTIN, Esq; M. P. *to the* Rev.  
C. WYVILL.

My Dear Sir,

**I** AM very sensible of the honour you have done me by your kind remembrance and attention in sending me the three volumes of  
Political

Political Papers which I have this day received.

Being much engaged at present by private business in consequence of the death of an elder brother, who has appointed me one of his executors, I have only time to remark that I trust that your Publication will prove that the real Friends to Parliamentary Reform are equally Friends to the true spirit of our excellent Constitution.

I remain, Sir,

With the most sincere esteem,

Your much obliged

and very humble servant,

JAMES MARTIN.

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### LETTER XXIII.

*From the* Rev. C. WYVILL *to* JAMES MARTIN,  
Esq.

BURTON-HALL, *June 23d, 1794.*

My Dear Sir,

I AM happy that you approve the general purpose of my late Publication. Foreseeing the increase of zeal for the Reformation of Parliament, which we now witness in many parts of the Kingdom, and fearing *that* zeal might not be accompanied with all the discretion which is necessary, I thought that it would not be unseasonable to lay these Papers before the Public. I lament the imprudence of those men who have given the Minister the very advantage he wished, viz. to attack them

O

with

with the utmost violence, overturning every fence to Personal Liberty, infringing some of the most important privileges of the People, and by his coadjutors, Burke and Windham, threatening to destroy the rest, and yet appearing to the deluded multitude to do all this *in defence of the Constitution*. When they quitted that strong ground, they knew not what they did, and it will be happy if their rashness be got over without some signal mischief to the Constitution, and without misfortune to themselves. With respect to the late transactions in Scotland I will say nothing, but that I think the Leaders of the People there more systematically wrong than the active Members of the London Societies; it is impossible to speak of the conduct of the Courts in that Country, in the prosecutions of Muir and Palmer, Gerald and Margarot, or of the conduct of Government in obstinately refusing to listen to the Petition from the Burghs of Scotland, and at last refusing to permit Meetings to be held for the purpose of petitioning Parliament, and even by force breaking them up: it is impossible, I say, to speak of these transactions with safety, and at the same time with truth and sincerity. In proportion as I condemn the conduct alluded to, and lament the fatal tendency of it, I applaud your uniform support of the true principles of the Constitution, and the interest of the Country; and I feel, in the midst of obloquy and misrepresentation to which I have lately been more exposed than in any former part of my life, the superior satisfaction arising from the approbation of a  
man

man like you, whose steady and disinterested Patriotism even the Enemies of Popular Rights, while they hate it, must respect.

I am ever, my dear Sir,

With great esteem and regard,

Your much obliged

and faithful servant,

C. WYVILL.

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LETTER XXIV.

*From* JAMES MARTIN, Esq; M. P. *to the*  
Rev. C. WYVILL.

DOWNING-STREET, 30th June, 1794.

Dear Sir,

I Cannot but be much flattered by your very obliging letter of the 23d. The approbation of worthy and sensible men, and the comfortable testimony of my own conscience, are the only rewards I have ever looked up to for persevering in those principles which I have imbibed from early education, and which I trust I shall never relinquish, as they appear to me to be rational and founded in truth, and tending to the dearest interests of our Country and of Mankind. To persons feeling as we do, it must be very grating to be misrepresented as unfriendly to good Order and Internal Peace, and to be so misrepresented by many whose whole lives have been spent in the most corrupt pursuit of the lowest self-interest; but it is to be hoped that Providence, in its own good time, will clear up these matters, and that the well-intentioned will be distinguished from their imprudent

and profligate abusers. Every man of humanity must be shocked to the last degree at the slaughter of his fellow-creatures, which has so long continued; and, next to this melancholy consideration, I feel myself hurt by the prevailing ill humour and discontent of the times. I should be most happy to see any prospect of a rational unanimity.

There is a notion very prevalent that Mr. Jay, who has lately been sent here from the States of America, has not only settled our disputes with that Country, but that he may be the means of bringing about a more general Peace. He brought me a letter from Sir John Temple, our Consul at New-York, with whom I was formerly acquainted in this Country. Mr. Jay is to dine with me to-morrow.

I have endeavoured to collect a few sensible, respectable persons to meet him, who, if he should remain long with us, may cultivate his friendship, and be of use to both Countries in establishing a thorough harmony and good understanding between them.

I must not conclude, my good Sir, without apologizing for again intruding on your time, but I could not resist the inclination I felt to return you my best acknowledgment for the very kind manner in which you expressed yourself in favour of

Your very faithful  
and obedient servant,  
JAMES MARTIN.

LETTER

## LETTER XXV.

*From the Rev. WILLIAM MASON to the Rev.  
C. WYVILL,*

*ASTON, July 14<sup>th</sup>. 1794.*

Dear Sir,

ON my return home a few days ago, after above two months absence, partly in Town and partly in visits to some Southern Friends, I found in my Library the present of your three volumes of Political Papers, for which I return you my thanks and acknowledgments.

So far as this Publication goes toward giving a full and authentic account of the proceedings of the Yorkshire Association, of which you were the Chairman, I am persuaded it will be deemed by an impartial Posterity a record of the temperate and legal means by which the Representation in Parliament was attempted to be reformed, and will do honour to the persons concerned in that attempt. But whatever else in these volumes, or in that which is to be added to them, may tend to depreciate the character of Mr. Pitt, or to exalt that of Mr. C. Fox, you must pardon me if I withhold my approbation.

You know that some time ago I wished you to wait for a less turbulent period ere you again agitated the then dormant question; and I find at present no reason to think that I wished the Cause and yourself ill when I expressed it, having found since that those who have of late seemed to appear so sanguine for

a Reform, have employed it merely as a stalking horse, behind which they might shoot at the very essential foundations of all Legal Government.

When I give you this as my firm opinion, it is not either with the hope that you should accede to it, or that you should take the trouble to controvert it. I give it you merely as another specimen of that freedom from reserve with which I have always delivered my sentiments to you. And I trust on your part you will receive it with the candour due to one who professes himself to be with sincerity,

Dear Sir,

Your very faithful

and obliged servant,

W. MASON.

My best compliments to Mrs. Wyvill, and kind wishes for the welfare of your young family.

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#### LETTER XXVI.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to the Rev.  
WILLIAM MASON.*

BURTON-HALL, July 19th, 1794.

My Dear Sir,

I AM much obliged to you for the frank sincerity of your letter of the 14th inst. and even where you differ from me, for the friendly regard and good will which you have manifested on this and many other occasions. I never expected that all my old Associates would

would approve my sentiments and conduct in the present situation of our Country, which is in many important respects new, and unlike any situation in which it ever was placed before. And I will say farther, that where I have the mortification to find my conduct disapproved by some of them, whose approbation I most wished to preserve, it may and does give me concern, but it does not alter my view of public measures and their apparent tendency, and consequently does not and cannot alter the conduct I think it my duty to hold. With you I am certain I shall obtain credit, when I assert that I am totally unconnected with any Party\*; that I am equally a stranger to Mr. Pitt and Mr. C. Fox, to Lord Lansdowne and the Duke of Portland, with the other new Ministers who have lately coalesced with Mr. Pitt. I have never accustomed myself to consider what sort of conduct their interest or my own might require, but have uniformly acted in all public business in the manner which seemed to me most likely to promote the welfare of the Public. When the question of Reform lay dormant, I was not the person, as you seem to suppose, who brought it afresh into discussion; for many years I remained a silent spectator of the public scene; I approved the conduct of the Minister; I supported him at some Elections against the interest and solicitation of some personal Friends; but, in conformity to the pledge

\* This assertion was at that time strictly true. Subsequent events have produced changes in the Editor's situation, respecting some of the Public Men here named, which in a proper place in the different series of letters it will be his duty to explain.

pledge I had given, I published nothing, nor did I take any other step in political business which had any tendency to agitate the national mind. After this performance of my promise, publicly given, to retire in certain specified circumstances, a change appeared to have taken place in the sentiments of many persons about two or three years ago, and new Associations to promote a Reform of the Representation were established in different parts of the kingdom. Considering these circumstances in connection with the effect to be expected from the Revolution in France, I thought it right to come forward and endeavour to prevent political parties running into those extremes on either hand which the writings of Burke and Paine were calculated to recommend. With this view I published the Defence of Price, honestly, but I am sorry to say, ineffectually, warning our great Nobles to make timely concession, and the rising party for Reformation to adopt temperate counsels, and to respect the Constitution while they attacked its abuses. After that Publication, we were soon threatened with a War with France. I thought it might be avoided, and I wrote the letter to Mr. Pitt, endeavouring to dissuade him from it; because by adding distress to the already existing discontents, it tended to bring on a Revolution, though it were entered into chiefly with a view, perhaps, to prevent one. After this unavailing effort in favour of Peace, finding the Societies in London and Scotland much inclined to Universal Suffrage, and fearing that

that might be adopted as their principle of Reform by the other new Associations, I endeavoured *with success* to recommend our Yorkshire principle, with some extension manifestly agreeing with the principles laid down by Mr. Pitt himself, to the Gentlemen of Durham and Northumberland, and published the State of the Representation, enforcing, as strongly as I was able, the principles of a temperate Reform, and shewing the necessity of supporting the common Cause of Liberty and Property united together against the dangerous innovations proposed by Young on the one side, and Paine, Thelwall, &c. on the other. In all this I think I have acted consistently; I am sure I have acted disinterestedly; and I still hope, what is also very material, that I have acted not without some beneficial effects to the Public. I hate the political principles of Burke, and many of our Lords; and instead of adopting their views, I wished Mr. Pitt to allay discontents, and keep the internal Peace of the Country, by avoiding Foreign War, and meliorating the condition of the People. I lament the contrary system which he has adopted; and I dread the effect of that strong infusion of Aristocracy which the late Coalition has poured into the Cabinet. The anarchical principles of Paine and Thelwall are still more to be abhorred, I own; but if Cade and Tyler were soon suppressed by the few Proprietors of Land in Edward the Fourth's time, why should the numerous Proprietors of Land now, reinforced as they are by the substantial Manufactur-

ers,

ers, Merchants, Tradesmen, &c. in a tenfold proportion, supported as they are by a Government armed with a great Military Force, and many other means of defence unknown to our Ancestors; why should we, I say, despair of preserving our Property, but by giving up Liberty, and investing Government with an arbitrary and uncontrollable Power? Considering this alternative with abhorrence, I wish to find a course more safe, and at the same time more consistent with the honest pride and dignity of a Freeman. That safe and honourable course, I think is only to be found, by adhering invariably to the rules and principles of the Constitution, by promoting Peace when it can be obtained with honour, and Reformation when it is sought on temperate and Constitutional Principles. On this ground I feel myself strong, and I shall not quit it, though reviled by hireling writers, and insulted by a misguided Populace. The time is not far distant, I trust, when I shall be joined on this ground by many of my former Associates, by whom my conduct for some years has been disapproved, and perhaps misunderstood; but if that encouraging event should never happen, I can be well content to live and die in this retirement, and with Milton, pardon the pride of the comparison, I can support my mind with the conscious satisfaction of having laboured honestly to serve my Country, but in a cause more just and better warranted than his. \*

I am

\* It is well known that Milton enjoyed a station of trust, though not the favour of the Usurper Cromwell: but he lived to see a change  
of

I am much obliged to you, my dear Sir,  
for your kind inquiries after my children.

Truly,

of times, and to experience the neglect of the restored Monarch, the frowns of his Court, and the distrust and ill-will of the Nation: for not even his *Paradise Lost* could charm to forgiveness the loyalty of the People, offended by the stern unconquerable fidelity of the Poet, to his Republican Principles. His wife, weary of a life spent with him in indigence and obscurity, expressed her wish, that he would yield to the temper of the times, and merit favour by a more accomodating disposition. Milton said, "No, he had lived an honest man, and he would die one."

This answer, supported as it was by a strict adherence to his resolution to the end of his life, in the Editor's judgment, does Milton more honour than any thing else he ever said or wrote. Exasperated by the tyrannical Government of Charles the First, after the Petition of Right had been assented to, and despairing, by any regulations to procure a stable security to liberty against the encroachments of Royal Prerogative, he might too hastily renounce the Constitution, instead of attempting to restore and improve it.

He might be deluded by his admiration of ancient Greece and Rome; he might be blinded by his partiality for Cromwell; and possibly he might be prejudiced by his contempt for the personal character of Charles II. but his integrity was inflexible; his patriotism was indefatigable his magnanimous mind felt and attained the supereminent dignity of virtue; and in the eye of reason, his incomparable powers as a Poet form but the second praise of Milton.

It may be truly affirmed, that in the ancient story of mankind there is not one Patriot or Sage, Socrates alone excepted, whose character for disinterested integrity, for courage, constancy and zeal to promote the welfare of his species, will bear a comparison with that of Milton. In modern times, Russell, Sidney, and More, have attained perhaps an equal height of moral excellence. To the first and second of these Martyrs to the Cause of Constitutional Freedom, this nation is indebted principally for that prosperity and happiness which for above a century it has enjoyed under a wisely limited Monarchy, at once securing Order and Rational Liberty. From the same source, and more directly from the example of Britain, and the spirit transfused from the Mother Country to her Colonies, the American States derive the enjoyment of equal order and liberty under their Republican Form of Government: and thence also, the other nations of the world, however variously oppressed, may draw the hope, the cheering hope, that the day will come when they will enjoy similar prosperity and happiness under Constitutions resembling either that of Britain, or that of the United States of America. Yet to these Glorious Patriots, though they sealed their patriotism with

Truly, and without partiality I may say they are five fine children; the two eldest, girls;

with their blood upon the scaffold, Milton may justly be compared.

His zeal was as disinterested, his courage and constancy were as great as theirs; his patience under different, but severe sufferings was extended through a longer space of life; his perseverance endured to the end of it; and, by the various exertions of his powers, probably greater benefits have been conferred on mankind than by the more splendid Martyrdom of Russell and Sidney.

Respecting the Cause of National Freedom, the principles of Milton were invariably the same, whether he supported the Protectorate of Cromwell or resisted the Restoration of Royalty.—He opposed its return alike in 1657, and 1660 alike in a Cromwell and a Stuart, because he erroneously supposed that the Hereditary Right of a King would ever prove fatal to Liberty. He saw no regulation, no restraint which could secure the People against the Invasions of Pretogative, or none which the Restorers of Monarchy would admit. Under the authority usurped by General Cromwell, he probably had acquiesced, as a temporary measure which would lead to some rational Form of Republican Government. And as soon as could be hoped, his views were gratified by the establishment of the Protectoral Constitution, by which various means of restraint on the Protector's authority were added to the grand controuling power of an amended Representation. His reasons for supporting the Protectorate thus limited, agreed substantially with those which afterwards induced him to oppose the assumption of the Crown by Cromwell, and the subsequent Restoration of Charles the Second. To the virtuous Lover of Liberty and Order, the new Republican Constitution of 1653 presented a fair object of his attachment. And certainly, if the defective origin of that Constitution could have been overlooked, if with Milton the nation had agreed to support it, and the new Assembly had acknowledged the authority by which they had been convened, the multiplied dangers to Liberty, for more than thirty years from Military Tyranny, from popular licence and the despotism of two succeeding Monarchs, would have been avoided: Russell and Sidney would not have perished on the scaffold; and the Revolution would have been an unnecessary enterprise.

But to the character of Sir Thomas More that of Milton may be still more fitly compared. Each of these Great Men was a Scholar, eminently skilled in the various learning of his age; each of them toiled with indefatigable assiduity for the welfare of his country and mankind; the toil of Milton received a recompence utterly inadequate to his talents, and it was soon withdrawn; More obtained the highest honours of his profession; but they only led him to a scaffold. Each of them was under the influence

girls; the three youngest, boys. With them I am glad to drop the anxious Politician, and ride with my boys before me, or teach my girls to spell with Mrs. Trimmer, or read little stories, and, of late, hymns with Mrs. Barbauld. You would like to see it, and your being here to see it would also give me great pleasure.

Mrs. Wyvill begs her best compliments to you; and I am ever,

My dear Sir, with great regard,

Your's very sincerely,

C. WYVILL.

ence of prejudice and delusion; Milton when he supported the first assumption of Power by General Cromwell, and More when he supported the claim of Papal Supremacy. But their errors in these respects disappear, and are lost in the crowd of virtues which compose their character. The bravery of More's resistance to the caprice of a brutal Tyrant, and his serenity on the scaffold, marked by a cheerfulness which was even facetious, will command the admiration of all men; the long patience of Milton under the combined misfortunes of blindness and poverty, and evil tongues in evil days, considered with the wonderful services he performed in that state of depression, command equal admiration; but with its claim a tribute of gratitude far exceeding what is due to Sir T. More.

To the men of ancient times, distinguished by the heroism of their virtue, Swift added the modern, but not less illustrious name of More. But to his short list of Worthies he ought to have added that of Milton, who in dignity of mind equalled, in utility to his fellow men, excelled them all. Equal to them in probity, fortitude, and magnanimity, he was superior to them in benevolence, in Patriotic zeal, and in the long continued and successful efforts of his Genius to promote the true welfare of his species.

Having done this justice to the man, who, as a Poet, is the pride and boast of his Country, the Editor hopes that the reference to him in this letter will not be misconstrued, and that his meaning will not be charged with arrogance or disrespect. To the immense superiority of Milton, in every respect, but the goodness of his Cause, to his disinterested Patriotism, to his undaunted fortitude, to his persevering zeal and integrity, he bows with the deepest veneration; but yet he dares to hope that he also may live and die an honest man.

LETTER

LETTER XXVII.

*From the Rev. Dr. TOWERS to the Rev.  
C. WYVILL.*

Rev. Sir,

**I** TROUBLE you with a few lines, in order to return my thanks for your very valuable Collection of Papers, relative to a Reform of Parliament.

It affords a strong evidence of the full conviction of a very respectable part of the Nation, and of men of great worth, of the necessity of a Parliamentary Reform, and is an honourable memorial of the very meritorious part that you have taken in the promotion of this important object.

But there is now no prospect of any Reform, till events shall have rendered it inevitable. For, unfortunately, the men now invested with the powers of Government appear to be attentive to little else but the prosecution of the most impolitic and destructive War in which this Country ever was engaged.

I am, Rev. Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

JOSEPH TOWERS.\*

ST. JOHN'S SQUARE,  
CLERKENWELL, No. 26,

August 2, 1794.

\* At that time one of the principal Dissenting Ministers in London, an intrepid Friend to Liberty and Reform, and an able Writer on Political subjects. Personally the Editor was almost unknown to him.

LETTER

## LETTER XXVIII.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to the Rev. Dr.  
TOWERS.*

BURTON-HALL, *August 25th, 1794.*

Rev. Sir,

**E**XPECTING to see my worthy Friend, Mr. Slater Milnes, as usual at this time of the year, which is the season of shooting Grouse, I deferred acknowledging the favour of your letter of the 2d instant, till I have now found I no longer have a chance of sending my answer under his cover, and therefore choose to send it without, rather than have the appearance of inattention to a Gentleman whom I so much respect, and of whose esteem I have repeatedly received the most obliging proofs.

I am happy to find that you approve the Publication of our Yorkshire Committee's Political Papers, and more particularly so, that my endeavours to promote a Reformation of Parliament for the last fifteen years, however unsuccessful they may have been, do yet appear to you not altogether unserviceable or useless to the Public. The Philosopher who seeks for some deep hidden truth, and whose search proves unavailing, often finds himself not ill rewarded by some unthought of discovery in the course of his pursuit. And thus perhaps it may befall us who are engaged in the pursuit of a Political Reform which we never may attain. We shall at least have the  
comfort

comfort to reflect that by those efforts, though frustrated respecting their immediate aim, we probably may have contributed to the acquisition of improvements not included in our plan, and to the preservation of Public Freedom in a better state than could have been possible, if the demand of Parliamentary Reformation had not been made. But this is putting the matter upon the lowest footing, for which I see no necessity at present. For though I lament with you the infatuation of our Rulers, and the violent animosities which their strange misconduct has excited, yet I still hope there is a sufficient portion of good sense and public spirit in this country to extricate us from our alarming situation, without the hazards of a Revolution. A little patience will do much for us, and time and taxes will probably do the rest. I wish you health, Sir, not only to see better times, but to contribute to make them so, and am with great respect

Your much obliged

and most obedient servant,

C. WYVILL.

#### LETTER XXIX.

*From WILLIAM SMITH, Esq; to the Rev.*

C. WYVILL.

Sir,

**I** AM much concerned at being disappointed by your absence from home of the pleasure I had promised myself in paying my personal respects to you at Burton; not merely from the opportunity

opportunity it would have afforded me of cultivating an acquaintance in which I should have been at all times happy, and never more so than in a crisis like the present, but also to have made my acknowledgments for the satisfaction and instruction I have received from the perusal of your publications, and for those copies of them which I owe to your polite attention. Notwithstanding the dark aspect of affairs at this moment, I am not without hopes, that the efforts which have been made in a good cause will yet not be fruitless, and in any event those who have laboured in it honestly and zealously will have no small satisfaction in reflecting on their having done their best to avert the storm.

I have the honour to be, with much respect,

Sir, your very obedient,

humble servant,

**WILLIAM SMITH.\***

MR. PETTIT'S,

Friday, 10th Oct. 1794.

\* To Mr. Smith, for his consent to the publication of this and another valuable letter of his, given with the most obliging frankness, the Editor owes his thanks, and he pays them with grateful cordiality. His merit as an advocate for a radical Reform of Parliament on temperate principles, and his ability as a Public Speaker, are but too well known to need the Editor's commendation. Suffice it to observe that Mr. Smith's first political attachment was to Mr. Pitt, the Friend to Peace and Popular Rights; and one of his most affectionate friendships was that which has subsisted without interruption, personally, to Mr. Wilberforce from the earliest period of his manhood. Yet when the Great, but inconsistent Statesman plunged his Country into a War with France, and deserting the Cause of Reform, attacked the Rights of the People with daring hostility, Mr. Smith did not hesitate to become the Opponent of the Minister, and, as a Public Man, to abandon the too partial friend who still adhered to him. With little change the adage may be well applied to this firm and consistent Patriot, Amicus Pitt, Amicus Wilberforce, Magis Amica Libertas.

P

LETTER

## LETTER XXX.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to WILLIAM  
SMITH, Esq.*

BURTON-HALL, OR 14th, 1794.

Sir,

I AM as much mortified as yourself, at my absence from home, when you designed me the favour of a visit from Bedale, about the end of last week. I should have had great satisfaction in conversing with you and my good friend, Mr. Peirse, on the present state of public affairs; and as we have long been agreed in reprobating the present system of our Cabinet, because it is a departure from those principles which it had originally professed, and on which alone the true interest of the nation can be promoted, it is not improbable, that from your conversation I might have seen reason to think, with you, less despondingly of the consequences and final issue of the War, connected as they must be with those internal discontents, which, under the irritating treatment of Ministers, have risen to such an alarming degree. But if there be a chance that the impending calamity may yet be averted, as you seem to hope, it will be chiefly owing to the public virtue of such men as yourself and our friend, and the very small, but truly honourable Band with whom you have acted. To that Band, though contending against an immense majority in Parliament, the nation has looked with increasing respect; you have held even the most daring Minister in

in some check, and prevented some of those violations of Popular Rights which rash men had threatened, and which too probably must have involved the Country in an immediate Civil War. I have endeavoured to co-operate with you, as far as lay in the power of so very private an individual, but with little effect, indeed, in Yorkshire, where many of my old Associates support the measures of Government, unable or unwilling to see how direct a contradiction those measures are to all they formerly approved in the first and happy period of this Administration. That their delusion has lasted so long, for the sake of the Public, is much to be regretted; that it will end soon, or that Yorkshire will interfere as it did in a similar situation of the Country in 1779, with vigour and unanimity, I see little reason to expect, at least, I fear it will not happen till that interference will be too late to prevent great calamity. I cannot conclude this letter without assuring you, as I do most sincerely, that I put a very high value on that esteem and approbation of my conduct which you have so obligingly expressed, and that I am with great truth,

Sir, your much obliged,  
and faithful humble servant,

C. WYVILL.

## NUMBER VII.

*Containing the EDITOR'S Correspondence with the Society, "the Friends of the People," in the years 1794 and 1795.*

## LETTER I.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to THOMAS BRAND  
HOLLIS, Esq.*

BURTON-HALL, Feb. 19th, 1794.

My Dear Sir,

**I** AM not surpris'd to find you write to me in a more dispirited and desponding stile than has been usual with you. We have seen bad times before; we have seen other Ministers supported in the most pernicious measures by great majorities in Parliament, while the People were too supine and indifferent to support with effect that radical Reform which alone can secure us from the influence of the Crown. But we never before have seen the People, or any great proportion of the People, adverse to Liberty, countenancing by their verdicts and their resolutions the most violent persecutions, and apparently ready to surrender their most important privileges. The People, however, still love Liberty, though for the present their fear of Anarchy predominates. But never shall we succeed to obtain any substantial Reformation in the only way in which

it ought to be attempted, viz. by pacific and legal efforts, unless that fear of Anarchy can be shown to be a groundless fear. To show *that*, and to bring over to the Cause of Liberty and Reform the great multitude of worthy men who shrink from the very name of either one or the other, it seems high time that the popular party should define their intentions more particularly than they yet have done, for while they rest in generalities prudent people will be fearful of joining, and the Minister will have every advantage against them.

Such Papers as those of the London Corresponding Society go so much too far for the Country, that they visibly do much more harm than good. I have waited some posts in anxious expectation of seeing the lately announced address of your Society. I expect much from it; if I do not misunderstand your intention, that will counteract the bad effects of Citizen Martin's Resolutions\*, and lessen the alarm of the Country, without which it is my firm opinion no good can be done. This was the drift of my last, as of my two preceding Pamphlets. What you and some other Friends of Reform think too accommodating, I fear is thought by several of our old Friends ill-timed and of bad, that is, of inflammatory tendency. Con-

\* The Chairman of one of the Democratic Meetings in London, who, not long before the date of this letter, had signed his name to a set of Resolutions which were generally offensive to the Friends of moderate and pacific Reform. In the paper alluded to, he was described by the French appellation, "Citizen Martin in the Chair." A personage who differed greatly from the Editor's excellent Friend, James Martin, Esq; M. P.

sider this, my good friend, and do not forget that the Country is far behind the Capital in zeal as well as in knowledge; and though in Yorkshire and other parts of the Country a Majority wish for Peace and Reform, there is so much fear of Anarchy and Confusion, that a Meeting of this County could not be thought of at present by any man of common sense; and till some evident change in the temper of the Public has taken place, I hope it will not be attempted. Yet for one Freeholder of Yorkshire I can answer that he is as much disgusted as yourself, at the late severe prosecutions, and the high prerogative doctrines of Pitt, and his violence for War. I am much obliged by your communication of the Sermon, which I had seen; your copy shall be circulated. The inclosed letter to Mr. Lindsey, I beg you will send or give him. And believe me, with great regard and many good wishes,

Your's ever most sincerely,

C. WYVILL.

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## LETTER II.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to THOMAS  
BRAND HOLLIS, Esq.*

BURTON-HALL, March 13, 1794.

My dear Sir,

**I** THANK you for the obliging communication of Mr. Wakfield's Pamphlet; the first edition of which I see is withdrawn, and another

another substituted in its place, which is less liable to the criticism of an Attorney General. I think Mr. Wakefield's \* argument is indisputably right: the present War appears to me, as it does to him, to be a violation of every principle of justice and Christian benevolence, aggravated by the grossest hypocrisy, which can impose on none but men too servile

\* Gilbert Wakefield, a scholar of great and various attainments; a master of English literature; an able critic in the classical learning of the Greeks and Romans, and not less eminent for his skill as an interpreter of the New Testament Scriptures. In politics, an enthusiastic friend of Liberty; in religion, an advocate for the utmost freedom of inquiry; and consequently led, by the honesty and boldness of his character, to reject many of the doctrines of the English Church, and in some degree to differ from every other sect of Christians. But though in the course of his speculations on religion this learned man chose to strike into a bye-path of his own, and in some of his opinions, particularly those respecting prayer, he may have been singularly in the wrong; yet was he most sincere in his profession as a Christian, and, supported by his faith, he attained that magnanimous superiority to the low pursuits of the world and the vicissitudes of life, which, when duly tempered by prudence, is Religion's last and choicest gift. In politics, his enthusiasm for Liberty may have betrayed him into some indiscretions. It was, no doubt, a great indiscretion; it was more, it was an offence against the common feelings of his countrymen in the hour of danger from a threatened invasion, publicly to express indifference for the defence of the Country. But this might well have been considered rather an expression of momentary peevishness, than of deliberate malice and disaffection to the State; and the remission of the punishment thus incurred by Mr. Wakefield, in whole or in part, probably would have been a more wise policy than the aggravation of it, by sending him in an unusual manner to be confined in the distant prison of Dorchester. In that gaol, far from his friends, far from the means of earning by his literary labours a subsistence for himself, his wife, and his children, he bore with patience the imprisonment to which he was sentenced. After the period of two years was expired, he was released; but in a short time he sickened and died: partly, perhaps, from the effects of his imprisonment, partly from a too long neglect of medical assistance. He met his approaching dissolution with the fortitude of a Christian, and his last hours were soothed by numerous testimonies of esteem and regret. A liberal subscription had already placed his family above indigence.

or too partial to think freely for themselves, I wish, however, that Mr. Wakefield had not published that note in his new edition, in which he intimates that Republicanism must be the consequence of a Reform of Parliament. It is the very doctrine which Arthur Young inculcates, and which Pitt and his Followers find to be their strongest argument against Reformation. I think a Reform conducted on the principles on which alone I have ever contended for it, viz. a Reform temperate in its object, and constitutional in its mode of accomplishment, is the most likely way to prevent confusion, and of course to preserve our Constitution in all its parts. But what may be the consequence of a haughty rejection of all pacific and moderate overtures, it is easy to see; and, in that case, I fear Reform and Revolution may indeed be synonymous.

I should be happy to hear your Society gains strength; but I own I cannot entirely agree with you in thinking specific plans should be avoided at present. *Now* is the very time when a specific plan, on moderate principles, seems to be absolutely necessary; and the want of it is what principally enables the Minister to discredit the Society, by representing your intentions to be hostile to the Constitution, and tending to throw the Country into confusion.

I am ever, my Dear Sir, with great regard,  
Very sincerely your's,

C. WYVILL.

LETTER

## LETTER III.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to THOMAS*

BRAND HOLLIS, Esq.

BURTON-HALL, March 24<sup>th</sup>. 1794.

My Dear Sir,

I AM much obliged for two copies of the proposed Resolution and plan of Reformation, with the minutes of the last Meeting of your Society, under separate covers of Mr. Francis, which, though directed to York, reached me here without delay. You tell me it is the wish of Mr. Francis that I would consider that plan, and communicate my opinion. I am unwilling wholly to decline complying with the request of a Gentleman to whom the Cause of Reformation is so greatly indebted; yet I feel that with my sentiments on the general subject of Reform, which have been lately submitted to the Public, to enter into a comprehensive discussion of that plan, to state my objections to the adoption of it, and to support the objections by offering the various reasons which might be adduced, would be an embarrassing and unpleasant task. I will only state my *general opinion*, therefore without entering upon a particular examination of the various important questions which are involved in the plan proposed.

It appears to me that the changes proposed are all of them improvements, some of them highly beneficial improvements of the Constitution. I am ready to acknowledge that in several respects they present a system  
of

of Reform superior to any which has been proposed. I also think the reasoning in most parts of the piece extremely strong, and particularly that the arguments against Universal Suffrage are equally forcible and prudent. There is but one circumstance wanting to induce me to give my entire approbation to the various measures proposed; and that is, there being some reasonable probability that these improvements can be carried in the way we all wish, viz. by pacific means, and through the intervention of Parliament. It is true the measures suggested are free from those objections which render the principle of Personal Representation inadmissible in any plan professedly pacific. But still, in my opinion, this is too extensive a plan in the present state of the Country to be carried by peaceful efforts; it cannot conciliate powerful men, because it would annihilate their power in the Boroughs, without securing to them a compensation, and it would neither satisfy the more eager Reformers in London, Sheffield, &c. nor would it be possible, I fear, to unite the great body of the Yorkshire Association on that ground. When I published the letter to Mr. Pitt, I stated very briefly, and in very general terms, the enlarged principles of Reform which I wished to see adopted by the New Associations, because, to those principles I thought the concurrence of my old Associates in Yorkshire might be obtained. What was only hinted at in that publication, has been fully explained in a subsequent paper; and, as far as I have been informed of the sentiments

sentiments of Yorkshire Gentlemen, I think they would agree that their former propositions should receive the extension I have proposed. But I am much afraid, if the Friends of the People adopt the propositions in question, it will be impossible to obtain the concurrence of this great County. And I wish it to be considered whether the difference is not greater in appearance than it would be in effect between Mr. Francis's propositions and those which I have suggested as the ground of general Union; with those exceptions alone, that the principle of compensation held out in the latter proposal, would tend to diminish the opposition of the Great, and also of the venal Inhabitants of the Boroughs; and the whole being but an extension of the plan formerly proposed by Mr. Pitt, and introducing no new principles, it would be extremely difficult to him to impute any sinister motives to those who might petition on this ground, or to justify his own conduct in opposing now what he formerly proposed, as the means of salvation to the Constitution. If I saw the People strenuous for Reform, I should not lay any stress on the last of these considerations: I certainly should think it less inexpedient that any new propositions should be adopted beyond the line drawn, or the general principles agreed to by former Associations, provided those new propositions had no tendency to alter the nature of the struggle, to introduce confusion, and to hazard what we possess, and what we might easily obtain, by aiming at a little too much.

much. But it is plain the People are far from being very eager or very unanimous on the subject. The Associations for Reform are perhaps more numerous than they formerly were, but Counter-Associations have been formed in still greater numbers; the Peerage is almost wholly adverse, and the Minister seems resolved to persevere, at any risque, in supporting the system of Foreign War and Internal Corruption. For these reasons, I earnestly wish that the Society of Friends of the People might be induced not to advance so much beyond the ground formerly occupied by Yorkshire, &c. as to hazard the losing of that concurrence on the part of that numerous Body, which, by a little skilful management, may be secured, I think, on terms of nearly equal advantage to the Public. It is time that the Society should define their intention more specifically than they yet have defined it. But in coming to that definition, it seems advisable that they should not only consider the various difficulties arising from the delusion of the times, but also attend to what has formerly been done by considerable Districts in favour of Reformation, who cannot be expected wholly to abandon their ground, but probably may be induced to occupy such new ground as may be contiguous to it, and on which the united strength of all moderate Reformers could hardly fail to succeed. I hope what I have here ventured to say, in the sincerity of my zeal in the Common Cause, will not be misconstrued by the Society; that it will not be thought to proceed from an  
unconciliating,

unconciliating, impracticable temper, or an obstinate and unreasonable attachment to an inferior plan, but solely from my conviction that the co-operation of Yorkshire and other considerable Districts cannot be hoped for, if the Society adopt the plan in question.

If the opinion I have stated should have weight with the Society, I should be very happy to communicate what occurs to me as the most convenient mode of obtaining that concurrence which I think so essential to success\*. In the mean-time, I cannot omit to declare my opinion (though I am sorry it is adverse to your's) that it was wisely done to postpone petitioning Parliament in this Session. If the terms of general union can be agreed on now, next winter the united Body may move forward with effect.

I see by the minutes, Universal Suffrage is to be proposed to the Society at its next Meeting. That principle, I hope, will be positively laid aside, as a principle on which general union with the Counties will be impracticable.

I am, my dear Sir, with great regard,

Your's ever,

C. WYVILL.

\* A Paper, containing Resolutions to this effect, was afterwards submitted by the Editor, through Mr. Francis, to the "Friends of the People:" for which see the Preliminary Papers.

LETTER

## LETTER IV.

*From T. BRAND HOLLIS, Esq; to the Rev.  
C. WYVILL.*

Dear Sir,

**I** RECEIVED 30 copies of your State of the Representation, and have taken the liberty, to disperse them to particular Members of the Society, rather than to throw them on the table, having observed that by doing so, many go without who deserve them most. Mr. F. has also seen your letters, and is much pleased with them, and says you perfectly agree.

He made a speech of an hour and ten minutes, very sensible, eloquent, and manly; though I could not agree with him in many points, I can but admire his talents and abilities; he seems equal to whatever he undertakes. His plan seems full of good matter, though not without objections, and capital ones, but may be of service in parts, and will be considered by a Committee with your's and others.

The previous question was carried by a great majority on the question of Universal Suffrage.

What think you of estimating the value of the Right of Election, and making returns by the balance demanded of the Public, which would greatly lessen the expence of redemption to the Public, according to Mr. F. for it is to be doubted much if the Public will ever submit to large reimbursements.

ments \*. The Corresponding Society sent a long letter to the Friends of the People, desiring them to send Delegates to meet in Convention, to consider of Reform of Parliament. A Committee is to return an answer; but we judge it very imprudent and improper to use the term *Convention*. We all wish and desire peace and harmony, knowing that riot and confusion will ruin the best concerted plan, and prevent any Reform.

I am, with great respect,

Dear Sir,

Most sincerely your's,

T. BRAND HOLLIS.

7th April, 1794.

\* By the sale of Crown Lands, exclusive of those Domains which in the judgment of Parliament ought to remain annexed to the Crown, for the accommodation of the Monarch and the Royal Family with due magnificence and splendour, a sum sufficient for this purpose might easily be raised. And the same measure which would afford the means of correcting the abuses complained of, amicably, and in the way of compensation, yet without addition to the burthens of the Public, would be highly beneficial in another view: It would bring into the most improved cultivation, a great extent of lands at present waste, or ill cultivated, and thus increase the wealth and population of the Kingdom. The peril to which Great Britain and Ireland are exposed from the recent aggrandisement of France, is truly formidable. And since their insular situation renders a similar increase of power impossible by the conquest of contiguous territory, it is felt to be the more indispensably necessary that we augment the means of our national strength and safety, by cultivating the whole extent of the soil which Nature has given us, to the highest state of perfection.

LETTER

## LETTER V.

From T. BRAND HOLLIS, Esq; to the Rev.  
C. WYVILL.

Dear Sir,

**I** REJOICE that the raising of supplies by subscription was not approved of. But censure of Ministers! How could you imagine so vain a thing, or that so unpolite an attempt would meet with success in these times? It is not a small matter, however, to have carried your first proposal. But is not raising supplies by a County Rate unusual, burthensome, and unequal, and supplying Government with a new method of taxation?

The letter you refer to is with Mr. F. who says he will make use of it, and has quoted it to the Society. But will you permit me to say, that some think you do not comply enough with those who differ from you, and the times expect more than some time past.

It is alleged that Universal Suffrage would increase the power of the Aristocracy. Why then so averse to admit it? It seems as if Universal Suffrage would unite the contest between Personality and Property. But there seems to be an inconsistency to object to an increase of power, and yet at the same time to dread the loss of it by what is said to increase it; for surely it cannot operate both ways\*. A moderate plan is desirable, but  
fear

\* To assert that Personal Representation, at the same time, and in the same circumstances, would tend to increase the power of the Aristocracy, and to destroy it, would be to assert a manifest contradiction. The objection of moderate Reformers to Universal Suffrage,

fear the simplicity and purity of our forefathers are at a great distance, and while a seat can be purchased by money, the price and value will be calculated like any other merchandize; but all this proves the necessity of Reform.

I inclose you a Paper; the resolutions passed unanimously, and an Address, and some resolutions which will be in all the Papers were referred to a Committee to consider Mr. F's Plan, &c. which will not be passed over in a hurry; probably not till next winter.—However, do not expect too much. The People must feel as well as think; it is well if they meditate in time to prevent confusion and disorder, the most to be dreaded by those who wish well to this Country, in which I join

Suffrage, as it is here stated by a Friend of Personal Representation, appears to involve this absurdity; but when they state their objection themselves, the inconsistency vanishes. They are unwilling that the Right of Suffrage should be imparted to the Populace of England at present, because from the gross ignorance and profligacy of perhaps the major part of that numerous class, it may be justly feared, that they would abuse that Right, whether the times were quiet, or the reverse. In quiet times the indigent, ignorant, and unprincipled part of the lower class, would form a great addition to the list of venal Voters, Elections would be more corrupt than ever, and the overbearing power of the Aristocracy would be increased. In other times, and in circumstances of national difficulty and distress, a different result might justly be dreaded. The Populace, exasperated by their sufferings, probably would become impatient, refractory, and ungovernable; the influence of the Aristocracy would be lost, and the prevalence of Anarchy would be fatal to the Community, and even to the lowest classes of the People. But the objections attending Personal Representation may be removed, by so improving the lower classes in knowledge and virtue, that they can no longer be thought unfit to share this most important privilege. And this improvement will be most effectually promoted by a gradual Reform, continually, but quietly advancing to the point in view, and avoiding those hazards to which the premature establishment of Personal Representation would unavoidably expose the Community.

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with you most sincerely, though we may think to obtain by different means the same purpose.

Wishing you health and happiness,

I am, with great esteem and regard,

Dear Sir, most sincerely your's,

T. BRAND HOLLIS.

CHESTERFIELD-STREET,

Friday, 11th April, 1794.

### LETTER VI.

*From the* Rev. C. WYVILL *to* SAMUEL SHORE, Esq.

BURTON-HALL, March 17th, 1794.

My Dear Sir,

**I** HAVE been anxiously waiting for some time for the result of your Society's deliberations on the propriety of defining their views more distinctly than had yet been done. But nothing has appeared in the papers since this their intention was publicly announced, nor has any private communication relieved me from my suspense. Though not a Member of your Society, I may be classed among its zealous supporters, having ever approved their attempt, and the principles on which it was made, so far as the Society have hitherto explained them; and having declined being a Member from no other motives than my inability to attend, and my belief that I could with more effect promote the cause of Reformation, in Yorkshire at least, by not connecting myself with any Society

ciety elsewhere. I consider your Society of so much importance, that on their perseverance, and, at present, on their prudence to adopt some specific measure of Reform which may at once be moderate and effectual, the success of those who wish to improve the Constitution by pacific means chiefly depends. I should be much obliged to you, therefore, for such intelligence as you may properly communicate, if nothing has been decided by the Society and ordered for publication. With respect to my late Pamphlet on the Representation, I have the satisfaction to assure you that, as I am informed by a worthy friend at Leeds, it has had the desired effect to bring many back from Universal Suffrage to the more moderate terms therein proposed, particularly at Leeds and its neighbourhood. I am also assured, from Northumberland and Durham, that the ground I have traced out for Reform is as extensive as the principal Friends for Reform there wish; but this is not to be understood as comprehending Mr. Grey and Mr. Lambton, of whose sentiments you probably know more than I do, but only the Country Gentlemen in those Counties. I hope, however, the Gentlemen I have just named see the necessity of being as guarded as possible. I have only two words more to add, and they respect you and myself. I know you detest the principles on which our Government is *now* conducted. I detest them as much, I despise the arts and abhor the cruelty now employed to intimidate the Friends of Reform, and subvert the principles of the

Constitution. But to resist Ministers with effect, we must be more than ever guarded. This was the true and only reason why, notwithstanding what you said about Mr. Cooper, I thought it absolutely necessary to say what I did to manifest my dissent from the spirit of his political writings.

I am ever, with great regard,

Cordially your's,

C. WYVILL.

## LETTER VII.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to SAMUEL SHORE,*  
Esq.

BURTON-HALL, April 7th, 1794.

Dear Sir,

**I** HAVE lately seen the plan of Reformation which was laid upon the table of your Society; and having been desired by Mr. Francis, through Mr. B. Hollis, to give my opinion upon it, I have done so pretty largely, and I much wish to find to the satisfaction of Mr. B. H. Mr. Francis, and the Society; my objection to it is, that I do not think that it would be ground on which it would be easy to effect a junction between Yorkshire and the Society; therefore, though if the whole Representation were to be new modelled, and that of England divided into 513 equal Districts, in each of which decent Householders should vote for one Member, I think it would be preferable to the old form, in which the

Districts

Districts are unequally divided, and two or more Members would be elected by the same effective body, on Mr. Pitt's plan, improved in the manner I have proposed, yet I do not think the superiority of advantage compensates for the increased danger of a miscarriage on that ground. In practice, I conceive little difference would be found; but a total change in the external form, or structure of our Representation would alarm many, as a plan not possible to be effected by peaceful means, and would be so great a deviation from what this County formerly adopted, that I see no probability of its ever agreeing to it. Whereas what I have proposed, differs in so small a degree from what we formerly approved, and Mr. Pitt espoused, that it is highly probable, at a convenient season, it would be easily carried at a County Meeting, and when laid before Parliament, it would be a plan to which Mr. Pitt would find it very difficult and very unbecoming for him to object. I have not heard from Mr. B. Hollis; but as you will soon be in Town, I hope you will be able to inform me what is thought of my letter, and perhaps to promote the junction which I have in view, without which your Society, I fear, has little chance to do any good.

I am ever,

My dear Sir,

Cordially your's,

C. WYVIL L.

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LETTER

LETTER VIII.

From SAMUEL SHORE, Esq; to the Rev.  
C. WYVILL.

OLAPHAM, June 20th, 1794.

My Dear Sir,

HAVING an opportunity of sending a few lines by Dr. Blackburne, I seize it to acknowledge your letter of the 7th of April last, and to thank you for it. I have delayed to reply to it so long, in hopes of sending you a more satisfactory answer to the questions you ask, concerning the disposition of the Society of the Friends of the People towards the amendment you suggested in the plan of Reform, which Mr. Francis submitted to their consideration. I am sorry it is not even now in my power to send you more decisive information on that subject; but from the lateness of our coming to Town, I have only been at three of the Society's Meetings, which were all that have been held since I came from the North, the last being the concluding one for the season, and the Address from which to the Public you would see in the Papers. I understand your letter had been read in the Society, but had not been formally noticed there till the last Meeting, when it was, with several others, referred to the Committee, along with Mr. Francis's plan, and the result of their deliberation upon all the Papers will be submitted to the Society when they meet again in the winter. You will perceive by this account, that nothing has yet been done

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in the Society so far as to decide upon the plan, or the amendment proposed, nor will any thing now be determined concerning either till the Meeting commence after the usual summer's recess. This, however, I imagine you will have already been informed of by Mr. Francis. Indeed, from the strange spirit of the times, there seems to be nothing lost by such an adjournment of the consideration: for the question between you and Mr. Francis is only one of expediency, whether your alteration or his original plan would be most acceptable in Parliament, and to the People in general; whereas from the delusion which has spread over the Country, there seems to be such an indisposition to all Reform, that whether any particular mode would prove a little more or less acceptable to the cool judgment of the People, appears a matter of little moment, so long as the present temper of the public mind continues. But it is certainly highly proper, duly to weigh this and every other rational scheme, that whenever a favourable disposition for an effectual Reform in the Representation of the People shall re-animate the public mind, the friends of that most necessary measure for the preservation of our Constitutional Government may be prepared, not only with a really good plan, but one that may be so generally acceptable as to stand the best chance of meeting with such support as will make it successful.

It was worthy of yourself to determine to attend the second Meeting in the North-Riding, which I heard of from our friend

Mr. Lindsey, and I trust that nothing personally disagreeable occurred to you, though I am sorry to learn the party opposite to your sentiments prevailed in carrying the proposition for a Subscription.

You will undoubtedly see the Reports of the Secret Committee. I have not yet had time to peruse throughout and with much attention the second voluminous one, which, from what I have seen, is calculated to keep up and spread the alarms so industriously propagated, but appears to fail in proving what it so confidently professes to do, that there has been long a formed settled scheme to overturn the Government and Constitution of this Country.

Some imprudences and injudicious improper conduct in some Individuals or Societies appear to be all that can fairly be made out. These are certainly to be reprobated, though they do not prove any design unfavourable to the real spirit of the Constitution, for having given occasion to the adversaries of Reform, and to those who, for reasons best known to themselves, have ceased to be friends to it, to calumniate and oppose even the most judicious and beneficial attempts at Reformation.

We are well here; my son and daughter, and their two children, are now with us. All unite in best wishes and remembrances to yourself, Mrs. Wyvill, and the young people,

And I am ever, my dear Sir,

Most cordially your's,

SAM. SHORE.

LETTER

## LETTER IX.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to PHILIP  
FRANCIS, Esq; M. P.*

**M**R. WYVILL presents his compliments to Mr. Francis, and requests that, instead of the hasty draught of resolutions which was left with him on the 29th of November last, the inclosed copy, which has received two material corrections, may be considered as the paper which Mr. Wyvill wishes to be submitted, through Mr. Francis, to the Friends of the People.

The first correction relates to the admission of Copyholders to the Right of Suffrage, which, when suggested by Mr. Pitt in the year 1785, as a part of his intended Plan of Reform, was received with general approbation. In fact, there is little difference between the Freeholders and a Copyholder of the same amount; their property, their habits, and their interests are nearly the same, and therefore the addition of Copyholders to the List of Voters would be a right measure. It would also be a convenient measure, because the Land-Tax Lists would then be sufficiently accurate registers for Voters of landed property. It would be prudent too, in as many respects as possible, to preserve an identity or very near resemblance between the propositions of Mr. Pitt in 1785, and those which in 1795 may be brought forward by the Friends of the People.

The second correction relates to certain difficulties stated in 1780 by Sir George Savile,  
Lord

Lord John Cavendish, and other excellent persons, when the Yorkshire Committee proposed the repeal of the Septennial Act, as the last article of their Association. It was then objected that more frequent Elections, under all their present abuses, would completely destroy the morals of the people, would ruin the independent families by more frequent contests with the Treasury, and thus prove a curse instead of a blessing to the Country. These, it must be owned, are grave and weighty objections, which, if not obviated by some such clause as that proposed at the ninth article of the first resolution, would probably be urged afresh on any future attempt to shorten the Duration of Parliaments, and would be found greatly to impede that general union in support of Political Reformation, without which the Society cannot reasonably hope for success.

Mr. Wyvill is aware that a plan founded on the grounds suggested in the inclosed Paper must fall far short indeed of theoretical perfection. But Universal Suffrage, as a principle of Reform, in the present state of the Country, seems to be neither attainable by any peaceful efforts, nor desirable, if it were possible to be attained. It is a principle so odious to the Great Body of men of Property and Power, that no Reform is likely be effected while any suspicion remains that the real intention of the popular party is to conduct the business of Reformation to that extent.

An unexceptionable principle has been adopted

ed by Mr. Francis, whose plan, considered in a speculative view, confined to England only, seems to approach as nearly to a perfect system of Representation as the circumstances of the Country would render adviseable.

If from the zeal and unanimity of the nation, the only question to be considered were what plan of Reform is the best and most advantageous which can be established, Mr. Wyvill readily owns the plan of Mr. Francis ought to be preferred.

But another material question should be well examined, namely, by what means are the changes proposed likely to be effected, or what prospect is there, that a sufficiently respectable Body of Petitioners can be united, to influence Parliament in the ordinary way of application to yield their unwilling consent. Considering the plan of Mr. Francis in this view, he fears that the very circumstances which are its praise in speculation, form in practice an insuperable objection to it. It is a plan of great simplicity, but it is a plan of great extent; it alters almost every thing in our Representative system, and affects the present state of every community in the Kingdom. In all probability, therefore, the Counties and great Corporations in England would oppose it, as offensive to their local prejudices, and injurious to their long-established privileges; the Boroughs would oppose it, as an arbitrary disfranchisement, without conviction or compensation; and Parliament would gladly avail itself of these objections, and would reject the proposal probably  
not

not without the applause of a great part of the Public, as being a destructive plan, which would leave not one stone of the fabric of Representation standing on another.

At this moment, true policy seems to require that the body of men, who, by their rank, fortune, and talents, are best intitled to lead the Popular Party, should avoid these various difficulties with the utmost caution, and should endeavour to unite the Friends of Reformation in every part of the Kingdom by more distinctly defining their views, and tracing the outline of a plan hereafter to be submitted to Parliament, which may be extensive enough to satisfy every reasonable Member of the more eager Societies, yet sufficiently limited to encourage the Counties, &c. to support the measure.

If it be expedient that only such principles of Reform be adopted as may probably gain the Counties and great Corporations, and diminish the opposition of the inferior Boroughs, it surely would be an additional recommendation, if the measures proposed would disarm the Minister and his Friends, and either prevent their opposition, or destroy their credit with the Public, if they should oppose. And if with a great probability of success, in a regular and safe way, the measures proposed should unite an extensive improvement of the Constitution, by which the condition of the People would be much meliorated, and every future melioration of it would be facilitated, it would appear prudent,

dent, in every respect, to adopt such grounds of popular union \*.

With these views the inclosed Paper was drawn up; and it is now communicated, through Mr. Francis, with great respect and deference to the Society, the Friends of the People.

BURTON-HALL, Dec. 20th, 1794.

### LETTER X.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to THOMAS BRAND  
HOLLIS, Esq.*

BURTON-HALL, Dec: 26th, 1794.

My Dear Sir,

A ROUGH draught of Resolutions was left with Mr. Francis, on the 29th of Nov. On my return home, I found some corrections necessary, respecting Copyholders, and the clause in manuscript at the beginning of the 9th Article in the printed sheet, which is material in order to obviate objections: as I think if these Resolutions were adopted by the Society,

\* In November, 1794, the Editor in obedience to a legal summons, attended the state Trials, as a witness in behalf of John Horne Tooke, Esq; and others. During his stay in London on this occasion, he had the satisfaction to converse with Mr. Francis, repeatedly, on the prospects, and probable plan of the Friends of the People. In consequence of what passed in these interviews, the Editor drew a sketch of measures, which he wished to recommend to the Society, in the form of Resolutions, and this Paper, dated Nov. 29th, 1794, was then left with Mr. Francis, to be submitted by him to the Society. Afterwards, on the Editor's return into the North, this Paper was enlarged by the addition of two clauses, and a fresh copy was sent, with these corrections, to Mr. Francis. This corrected Paper, with the additional clauses, printed in Italics, may be found among the Preliminary Papers in this Volume.

ciety, they might be proposed at County Meetings in Yorkshire, Durham, Northumberland, as soon as such Meetings can be called with prudence; and they probably would be approved. And then, the measures, thus supported, by good management on the part of your leading Society, would probably be adopted in London by the more eager Reformers, and also, in Sheffield, &c. Whenever a Union of this kind can be effected, *then*, and *not before*, will our legal and pacific plan of Reform, stand some chance of success, and put on the appearance of of feasibility.

I hope this will find my good friend in health and spirits, as I am at this moment, notwithstanding the great severity of a Northern Winter, which I now experience,

I am, dear Sir,

Your's, very sincerely,

C. WYVILL.

## LETTER XI.

*From CAPEL LOFFT, Esq; to the Rev.*

C. WYVILL.

Dear Sir,

**I** WRITE in some haste, to answer your obliging letter, though I cannot answer it as I could wish.

Any measure of Constitutional Reform in the Representation which could have any salutary efficacy, I could be always glad and desirous to promote; and I am struck with the liberality, with which you and your friends meet

meet us on the great point of shortening the Duration of Parliament.

But I fear nothing will be done, till, for want of something done both with regard to Reform and Peace, the time comes when too probably nothing can be well done, but all will be hurry, violence, and confusion.

You will have been one of those Friends of Peace, Order, and the Constitution, most strenuous in endeavouring with invincible perseverance to avert this dreadful crisis.

Certainly the purchase by appropriating part of the Crown Lands to the abolition of this abused franchise, would be one of the most popular acts a King could do, or a Minister, anxious for the honour and interests of the Crown, could advise; but I see no probability of its moving from that quarter; and unless it should, you, I believe, will agree with me, that unsuperable obstacles appear to threaten it, if it moves from any other at this time.

With compliments of the season, and wishes to you of many happy returns of it, and that we may yet, if our lives are continued, see, if possible, the threatening storm averted, which hangs over our Country.

I remain, with true esteem,

Dear Sir, your obliged friend,

CAPEL LOFFT.

30th Dec. 1794.

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LETTER XII.

From PHILIP FRANCIS, Esq; \* to the Rev.  
C. WYVILL.

COURTNEY-HALL, near NORTHAMPTON,  
26th December, 1794.

Sir,

**B**Y yesterday's post from London I received the favour of your letter of the 20th, inclosing some printed copies of resolutions to be submitted to the consideration of our Society, which I shall not fail to do the first opportunity. What plan we are likely to pursue, or whether we shall proceed at all in a business, which at present seems to me perfectly hopeless, are questions I am not at all able to resolve. I am afraid that the Body of the Nation must be convinced of the necessity of a Reform by something more coercive than argument, before they will ever be brought to unite, or, if united, to act in support of either your plan or mine, or any other that would be effectual. But as every thing that was improbable has happened, there is no presump-

\* The obliging readiness of Mr. Francis to allow his share of the Correspondence in this Number to be published, demands the Editor's most grateful thanks, and he pays them with pleasure. Among the foremost of the Friends of Constitutional Liberty, Mr. Francis is distinguished for his ability and vigour, his unwearied perseverance, and the long consistence of his conduct from his first appearance in Parliament, about the middle of this reign, to the present time, comprehending a period marked by extraordinary events, by the aggrandizement of the Crown, the servility of Parliament, and the insatiation of the Public, panic-struck, and ready to surrender its rights. That they were not wholly lost during the strong delusion of the times, that a hope yet exists in the breasts of the true Friends of their Country, is chiefly to be ascribed to the efforts of that patriotic Band with whom Mr. Francis has so ably co-operated.

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tion now in looking forward to events which may terrify those who are not to be convinced. In many points, I find we are agreed. To shorten the duration of Parliaments, without changing the mode of Election, would only be to multiply and aggravate the mischiefs of the present system. As to Universal Representation, or any other scheme that should totally separate the power from the property of the Country, it is a thing totally out of question; nor do I think there is much danger of it in any sense, except as it may be used for an instrument to deter the reasonable and well-disposed part of the Community from yielding to any Reform at all. I am very unwilling to acknowledge, even indirectly, or by compliance, that the right of voting is a property which cannot be taken away without a pecuniary compensation. Yet I do not value the money so much as the admission; and for the sake of a peaceful accommodation, I would willingly pay my share of it. The mode you propose, supposing the fund to be sufficient, seems to me unexceptionable.

If I understand the 5th Resolution, I suppose it will alter the numbers for Scotland, which I think should be avoided, for fear of embarrassing the main plan with incidental questions. The 6th Resolution admits *Householders, who have paid taxes*, to vote generally in Parliamentary Elections, without distinction of Cities, Boroughs, or Counties. If so, you adopt my plan in substance, though not in terms. For certainly the single description of Householders paying Taxes either includes,

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or must prevail over all the rest. Then what do you gain by annexing the vote to a variety of different qualifications? \*

\* The objection to the proposal of Mr. Francis, that taxed Householders should be the only Voters, stands thus:

1st, This measure would operate as a disfranchisement of all the present Voters, who are not included in the description of taxed Householders; it would naturally disgust the persons thus disqualified, who from their possession of land, &c. would be unexceptionably proper Voters; it would throw many of these disqualified persons into the scale of Opposition, and thus by adding their weight to that of the selfish and ambitious part of the Aristocracy, would increase the difficulty of effecting a Reform by legal and pacific means.

2d, This measure is proposed by Mr. Francis to obviate the evils which attend our General Elections under the present immense variety of Election Rights, which are ill ascertained, and in Counties more especially, are difficult to be exercised at present, without opening a door to the most harassing expence, litigation, &c. The evils are admitted to exist to the extent alleged; but it is objected, that they are curable by establishing Parochial Polls, and a Register of the persons intitled to vote in Counties, and the great Towns. By these, and other regulations, many Freeholders, Copyholders, and other persons, possessing a landed qualification, might retain their Election Franchise, and reinforce the taxed Householders, who would form the main Body of Constituents by a class of Voters who are too numerous and too respectable to be omitted. Elections, now attended with expences and other difficulties, which frequently render them highly inconvenient, and in some instances almost impracticable, would thus be facilitated to a degree which would leave no ground of serious complaint; and the Constituent Body would be considerably improved by retaining so many unexceptionable Voters. In this view, therefore, to simplify the plan of Reform, as proposed by Mr. Francis, would be disadvantageous in two respects; it would lessen the probability of success, and it would weaken the Constituent Body to avoid evils which might be removed without disfranchising Voters confessedly proper to be retained. Mr. Francis and the Friends of the People appear to have felt the force of these objections; in their declaration of the 30th of May, 1795, they with equal prudence and candour professed their opinion, that if it should appear that the number of Freeholders and Copyholders of the yearly value of forty shillings, who might not be Householders, should be sufficient to deserve consideration, there could be no objection to the admission of persons, so qualified, to vote in the Parish and for the Division where their property lay.

In the 7th you seem to adopt the idea of Parochial Elections. If that be your meaning, I wish you would express it more distinctly, and at large. In my opinion, it is essential; nor can I conceive what objection any honest man in the Kingdom, of any description, can have to letting the Voter vote in his Parish, or at some other convenient central station, instead of being conveyed, whether at his own expence or that of the Candidate, at a monstrous charge, as they are at present to the County, Town, or other place of Election. You say that, in all probability, the Counties and great Corporations in England would oppose my plan, as offensive to their local prejudices, and injurious to their long established privileges. Undoubtedly, I do expect that reasonable, and even selfish men may be disposed to make some personal sacrifices for the sake of a very great public benefit, especially, if I can convince them that the advantage they surrender is not very material, or may be better enjoyed in another way. Without such a supposition, it is in vain to propose any thing that trenches on the present establishment.

Observe that I am speaking of Counties and great Corporations, whose choice is not determined by money. Now suppose that Yorkshire, instead of the present plan, were divided into thirty convenient Districts, consisting of so many Parishes, each District returning one Member, I should like to know what individual in the whole County, (among those who did not sell their votes to their interest)

would really suffer an injury, or have a pretence for complaints?

As it is, I suppose thousands of Freeholders in the County never vote at all; and the Members in possession, let them behave as they may, must always remain undisturbed; for who but madmen would enter into a contest for such a County, or indeed for any County?

On my plan, or any other that followed population, the Representatives of Yorkshire, I conceive, would be increased. Upon the whole, Sir, there are two points to which I would wish you to give your attention.

1st, Whether in proposing a scheme of Reform it may not be adviseable to hold up a model, even beyond our expectation of success, and then endeavour to approach as near to it as we can in the practice? Some of the Advocates of Universal Suffrage tell me that to demand *their* object, in the first instance, is the only way to obtain mine; but it would be on a principle which I do not like, viz. "iniquum petas, ut æquum feras."

2dly, Whether it might not be advantageous to accustom the Public, as early as possible, to contemplate such a model, and long before the period or opportunity when it might be actually proposed? We know not how soon, or under what circumstances, that opportunity may offer; but all prudent men will recollect that the present time hath brought forth events with which no man suspected that the past was pregnant.

I am, Sir, with great truth,

Your most obedient humble servant,  
P. FRANCIS.

## LETTER XIII.

*From the* Rev. C. WYVILL *to* PHILIP FRANCIS,  
Esq.

BURTON-HALL, near BEDALE,  
YORKSHIRE, Jan. 7, 1795.

Sir,

I RECEIVED your favour of the 26th December, and I observe with pleasure that your sentiments respecting all the great objects of Reform coincide with mine, and the points on which there is any variation of opinion are matters of inferior importance, or only respect the application, more or less extensive, of those principles in which we are agreed. In the present state of the Country, it seems evident that no Reform, on the principle of Universal Suffrage, can be effected by peaceful means; and it seems little less evident, that the existing circumstances must undergo a very great alteration before a Reform on that principle would be desirable, however easily attainable it might be. If we are right in these opinions, the interest of the Public requires that the principle of Universal Suffrage not only should not be insisted on, but should be expressly acknowledged not to be the principle on which a Political Reformation is desired. And if that theoretical ground should be abandoned, what better position can be assumed in its stead than that which you have recommended, viz. that Householders should be allowed to vote? I think they ought to be Householders paying Taxes, and from

this limitation, I believe, you do not dissent. If then your respectable Society concurs with us in this fundamental principle, the other questions which remain for consideration are matters of inferior moment, and of less difficult discussion. I trust there is in the nature of those questions nothing so hard and untractable as to prevent a General Coalition of the Friends of Reform, without which it were the greatest folly to expect success. On this supposition, therefore, I shall proceed to explain my views more fully than before, in offering that paper of November 29th to the consideration of the Friends of the People. It appears to me then that the Members of the House of Commons, who contend so honourably for Political Reformation, never can overcome their more numerous opponents, and induce Parliament to confess and correct its own abuses, but by the assistance of a great majority of the People. Not of that class at the lower end of society, many of whom wish for Universal Suffrage only to abuse it, but of those middle classes, who have had some education, who have some property and some character to preserve, and who probably would prefer some limitation of the Right of Suffrage, as more friendly to peace, to order, and even to rational liberty. But in seasons of peace and prosperity the general support of persons of this description is not to be obtained by any efforts of reason or eloquence; by any display of existing abuses, or any proofs of the dangerous consequences that probably may result from the correction of Parliament.

Their

Their concurrence is only to be expected from the immediate pressure of calamity, in times of national distress. When the abuses complained of have actually produced the evils which speculative men had stated to be their genuine effects; when internal oppression has been added to the grievance of an unnecessary war, and no redress, no protection is found in Parliament, then it is that the habitual disposition of the middle classes to acquiesce and submit, will give place to a just and general discontent. We are not yet arrived at this point of general dissatisfaction, when men of mild and patient characters will concur in demanding a Reform of Parliament; but we cannot be far distant from it. The arts of Ministers have lost much of their effect; the delusion is nearly past; the dangers of the Country are seen, its oppressions are felt; in all probability another campaign will completely fill the measure of ministerial provocation, and before the end of the current year petitions to Parliament will re-echo from every part of the Kingdom. It behoves the popular agents to watch for that favourable moment, and to be prepared to seize it, with the united strength of the People. It behoves them to beware of the mutability of public opinion, and to settle the principles and extent of their plan, in the present interval of calm and temperate consideration; lest the opportunity of effecting a pacific Reform be lost by delays and discussions now proper, but then most fatal; lest, on the one hand, the continued oppressions of Govern-

ment should drive the People to desperation and violence: or, on the other hand, the adoption of wiser measures should relax their zeal for Reformation, and lull them into their former state of supine indifference.

To effect that general union of the People, without which not the most moderate plan of Reform can have the smallest probability of success, it seems expedient that your leading Society should adopt some specific propositions, so temperate as to secure the concurrence of Yorkshire and the major part of the Counties, and yet so effectual as to content the more eager Societies in London, Sheffield, Manchester, &c. I would recommend the adoption of a few short propositions, distinctly marking the principle and extent of the plan intended, but not the plan itself in detail; because I think the desired union may be obtained with greater ease, if a few simple but specific propositions be offered to the several Meetings, than if a plan on the very same principles, but containing a great variety of debatable propositions, should be held forth to them by your Society. Here then the question comes to be asked, What valid objection can be urged against adopting propositions, tracing, in a summary manner, the outline of your plan? To which I frankly answer, that I feel no objection to give my individual assent to such propositions; but I am confident that the assent of the County of York, and of many other Counties less forward in the cause of Reformation, could not be obtained to any system of Reformation on  
ground

ground so extensive. The great body of Reformers in this County has pledged itself to support a limited disfranchisement of Boroughs, by purchasing the consent of the persons interested; and if those terms should be adopted by your Society, I think it extremely probable, but I say it on no express authority, that the Yorkshire Gentlemen might be induced to pledge themselves to support Annual Parliaments, an extension of the Right of Suffrage to all taxed Householders, and a Reform on similar principles in Scotland, with the other articles mentioned in the Paper of November 29th. An attempt to go beyond this line, to effect a compulsive disfranchisement of the Boroughs, to set aside all the existing Rights of Election, and to divide the Kingdom into new Districts to return each a single Member, if made in Yorkshire, or in many other Counties less zealous for Reformation, I think, could not succeed, because it is considered as hardly possible to effect a Reform by peaceful means, if those conciliating limitations be not adhered to. It is for this reason, therefore, that I, who own my individual wish that so extensive a Reform might be established, do yet recommend, for the sake of peace, a less extensive scheme, in favour of which there seems good grounds to hope a sufficient union of the County Associations, and other considerable Bodies of Men in London, Manchester, &c. may be effected with the Friends of the People. I am aware that there is weight in the difficulty you state respecting the Reform in  
the

the Representation of Scotland; but the abuses there are so enormous, and the discontent excited by them is so great and general, that I think that difficulty ought to be over-ruled, and the proposed benefit ought to be extended to that Country. It might be prudent, however, to suspend the adoption of that article, till the sense of the principal Societies of Reform, and distinguished Individuals of that Country could be taken upon it, and their co-operation in support of the other articles respecting England could be secured. With respect to Elections in Parishes, and even smaller Districts in some few cases, I think it essential to the cure of our present disorders at Elections; but for the reason assigned for recommending a few summary propositions, instead of a plan in detail, I thought it right merely to offer the principle to the Society. If their agreement to this article and the others should be obtained, the very same resolutions might be offered, and I hope would be carried in Yorkshire and many other Counties, in the course of the present year; and then Bills, according with the principles thus agreed on at Meetings of the Collective Body in their several Districts, might be framed by yourself and the other enlightened Friends of the People who have co-operated with you in Parliament.

To the two queries which you have proposed to me, Sir, my answer will be a brief one.

I think nothing can justify either an Individual, or a Society of Men, by whom any plan

plan of Reform on principles which are thought improper by the Individual, or Society, may be recommended. This has been done by some persons, I believe, with the politic view which you have mentioned; but the success which has attended this crooked policy has not been what they expected. The insisting on Universal Suffrage, coupled as it has been with the circulation, and, in some cases, with the express approbation of Paine's pamphlets, has enabled Government to excite a panic for property, and for a time almost to persuade the Nation to surrender its Liberty, to prevent a Revolution. And though this panic fear is nearly extinguished, yet without great caution to avoid those obnoxious principles, Ministers will be able to renew the alarm with greater violence than ever, and then all hope of peaceful Reform will vanish from our sight.

2. With respect to the second query, my opinion is, that it is not prudent to hold out to the Public a plan of Reformation which is not expected to succeed, even though it be formed on principles which are perfectly unexceptionable; it seems to me in all cases imprudent, but more especially so, when from various circumstances considerable danger exists either that no Reform will be effected, or that it will be effected by violent means.

If a temperate plan might probably be carried into execution, by orderly application to Parliament, a less temperate plan should not be proposed, because that would load the plan, which really might be carried, with all the difficulties

difficulties and objections which attend the more extensive scheme, and thus retard or altogether defeat that which is not so extensive. It may be thought that holding a model of Reform more perfect than is expected to be carried will excite a greater degree of popular support; but then it is to be feared it may also excite in a still greater proportion the alarms of quiet men, and the opposition of a powerful Aristocracy; and then by what peaceful means can any Reformation be effected? While a hope of peaceful Reformation is left, and at present that hope is by no means a faint one, the utmost caution should be observed not to lessen the prospect of success by adopting measures whose tendency is unpacific. Should the Country be driven to a state of distraction, should revolt unhappily break out, other measures in that terrible crisis may be expedient; but I doubt not you concur with me in thinking it is our duty to avert that crisis, if it be possible, and to propose, at present, such a moderate change as we have reason to hope our united application may obtain.

I think, Sir, you are well intitled to the thanks of your Society, and of every Friend to the Constitution on its genuine principles, for the plan which you have drawn up with so much ability, and on principles so just and moderate; and no one would rejoice more sincerely than myself at the establishment of your plan by quiet means, if that were practicable, because in my judgment it approaches as near a perfect system of Representation for  
England

England as existing circumstances would admit. But conceiving it impossible to be carried into execution by any orderly efforts of the People, I own my wish is that you may, for the present at least, decline accepting the thanks of your Society, especially as the second edition contains a passage between pages 19 and 24 which seems not altogether to accord with some prior declarations of the Society.\*

I beg pardon, Sir, for the freedom I have used in this address to you and the worthy Friends of the People. You, by your obliging frankness, have in some measure led me into it; but if I had felt less confidence in the public spirit and magnanimity of yourself and the Society, my expressions would have been more scrupulously measured.

I am, with very great respect,

Sir,

Your most faithful

and obedient servant,

C. WYVILL.

#### LETTER XIV.

*From WILLIAM SMITH, Esq; to the Rev.*

C. WYVILL.

PARNDON, near HARLOW, ESSEX,  
*Jan. 9, 1795.*

Dear Sir,

**I** Much lamented that it was not in my power to avail myself of the invitation to meet you, which I received from our friend Wil.

\* At this distance of time, the Editor, not having preserved the Paper which is here alluded to, cannot recollect this alleged inconsistency.

berforce,

berforce, during your stay in Town, by which indeed I received the only intimation of your being there, till the card you obligingly left in Park-Street was sent down to me at this place. It was our intention to have settled in London almost immediately on our return from the North, but the confinement of Mrs. Smith rather unexpectedly fixed us here.

I have now to acknowledge the receipt of your favour, with the plan of Reform; one copy of which, with a few remarks which I have taken the liberty of subjoining, I now inclose. On *your hypothesis, that more cannot be done*, I should be much disposed to agree with you on almost every point, could it be proved that *so* much could be accomplished; but I fairly own that, as yet, I expect nothing, and that more may be done when the Nation shall be sufficiently awake to the importance of the subject to call imperiously for some Reform, without which it will I fear never be given. An uniformity of qualifications, unembarrassed by charters and other partial privileges, throughout the whole Kingdom, does appear to me a most desirable object in every point of view—so highly important, that, in my present way of thinking, I would willingly wait some years longer to attain this point. The new division of the Country into Districts, with very extensive Right of Suffrage, (*by no means Universal*) does, I own, seem to me the most effectual and radical Reform; nor am I at all sure that it may not be obtained as soon as any other which either you or I should think worth accepting, you have no doubt already

ready observed in this my agreement with the plan of Mr. Francis, not grounded, I assure you, on any consultation between us, but simply on the preference which consideration of the subject has induced me to give to it above any other which I have yet seen. I still, however, feel a perfect conviction how much depends on *practicability*; and let it be shewn to me that his plan cannot possibly be carried, and that *another* less perfect, but including in it a principle of correction for the acknowledged error it retains, probably may, and I shall joyfully coincide in the attempt to obtain the latter. Your paper will be early brought forward in our Society, and will, I am sure, be considered with that attention and respect which every thing deserves that comes from one so long, so zealously, and so steadily employed in the service of our great cause, and from whom it has derived such essential advantages.

I hope to be favoured with a call, and shall be happy to pay my respects to you when you next visit London; and in the meanwhile I remain,

Dear Sir,

Very sincerely and respectfully your's,  
WM. SMITH.

P. S. Were you not delighted with W. and D.'s conduct? Could not Petitions from some parts of the County be sent up to second their efforts?

REMARKS

REMARKS by WILLIAM SMITH, Esq;

*On the Propositions offered through P. FRANCIS, Esq; to the Society, "The Friends of the People," dated London, Nov. 29, 1794.*

1. Why should not all those places or persons be deprived of the separate and exclusive Right of Election where, from any cause whatever, it appears that that Right either has in fact been, or naturally must or will be, exercised on improper grounds, or in a manner inconsistent with the public welfare?

2. Approve this mode of raising the sum necessary for the purchase of *what shall be adjudged saleable property.*

3. Good—if a more extensive plan be *absolutely impracticable.*

4. These, and probably many others; but most or all of them as parts of Districts.

5. Query: Whether any addition to the numbers of the Representation of Scotland, under their present mode of Election and qualifications of Electors, would answer any other purpose than to increase rather than diminish the power of the Aristocracy there, and of the Crown in the House of Commons? Query also, if their proportion of taxation deserves more Representation?

6. Perfectly right—but where? For Counties only, or for Towns or Districts?

7. Absolutely necessary on every plan, but that plan the least which renders the fewest precautions necessary.

8. Are

8. Are wages designed to obtain any other objects, than, 1st, to mark dependence on the Constituent, and, 2dly, to secure attendance on duty? If so, and these points can be equally well attained without the expence, I should think it unnecessary; if not, they are well worth the purchase.

9. Query: On three years, or if one, a proportion only to go out in rotation? But very doubtful on this idea.

## LETTER XV.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to WILLIAM SMITH, Esq;*

BURTON-HALL, Jan. 13th, 1795.

My Dear Sir,

**M**Y opinion respecting the Plan of Reform proposed by Mr. Francis entirely coincides with your's in a speculative view. I think it the most perfect which the present state of property and morals in this Country would admit; but I cannot think it would meet with no greater opposition from the Crown and the Aristocracy than a more limited plan on the same principles, that is, a plan which should, like that of Mr. Francis, give the Right of Suffrage to Taxed Householders, but should confine the disfranchisement of Boroughs to a certain number much short of the whole, and that disfranchisement to be not compulsive, but effected by purchasing the voluntary surrender of the franchise.

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in question. A limited Reform might thus take place with the good-will of the Boroughs themselves, and a very considerable share of power might be transferred to the body of the Nation without commotion at the time, and without producing that implacable resentment of injuries received, which would be the consequence of a compulsive disfranchisement, and which, at no very distant period, would probably break out in civil strife. What I have ventured to propose to your Society, would be the offer of a compromise from the People to the Crown and the Nobles. If it were accepted, we should gain much for our Country, without expence or risque. If it were rejected, the offer would not be binding on us; we should be perfectly at liberty, I conceive, to increase our demand, even to the extent of Mr. Francis's plan, if events appeared to render that expedient. And if the Nation should hereafter be involved in the miseries of a civil war, in consequence of the rejection of so mild a proposal, they who made it would be exculpated, and the blame would rest upon those who had rejected an offer substantially the same, or almost the same, which they had formerly proposed or supported.

The whole Nation admits the justice of our complaint, but the fear of innovation prevents the concurrence of the majority. They are apprehensive for the peace of the Country, and the safety of the Constitution. What is too bad in the frame of our Representation to be worth repairing, they would gladly see pulled

pulled down, and rebuilt; but what is solid and substantial, and though not strictly agreeable to the rules of proportion, yet capable of being rendered in a high degree convenient and comfortable, they wish to stand. This, it may be said, is mere prejudice. Be it so; but which is the easier task? Which is the more likely task to be quietly accomplished, to Reform Parliament with the prejudices of the Public *for* you, or *against* you? The fair answer to this question must be, I think, in favour of that plan which proposes to correct the principal defects in the House of Commons in an amicable and uncompulsive way, and to leave the found parts, not merely as they are, but improved and reinforced, as much as may be, by regulations in the mode of Election, by the payment of wages, by increasing the number of their Representatives, and above all, by enlarging greatly the number of respectable Voters. From what I know of Yorkshire, and several other Counties in different parts of the Kingdom, I think their assistance might be relied on, if the Society took the more limited plan. The adoption of it would be a considerable advance on the part of Yorkshire; but as the old principles of conciliation to which we stand pledged would be preserved, I believe (but without having any express authority to say so) that at a proper time Yorkshire might be induced to agree to that advance, for the sake of union with your Society. On more extensive ground, I own I see no reason to think you will ever obtain in the Country that degree of confidence and

general union by which you may be enabled by any peaceful efforts to effect a Reformation in Parliament.

Having said thus much here, and having enlarged upon this subject still more in two letters to Mr. Francis, which you probably will see very soon, I forbear trespassing farther upon your time, and beg leave to assure you that I am,

With great esteem,

Dear Sir,

Most faithfully and sincerely your's,

C. WYVILL.

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#### LETTER XVI.

*From* RALPH MILBANKE, Esq; *to the* Rev.  
C. WYVILL.

BOND-STREET, Jan. 10th, 1795.

Dear Sir,

**I** AM very much ashamed at not having sooner acknowledged the receipt of your's, containing the printed Resolutions relative to a Reform of Parliament. They certainly are very judicious, and, if adopted, would tend to the happiness and tranquillity of the Country.

The only one upon which I have any doubt is the 9th; for though I am of opinion the Septennial Bill ought to be repealed, I should rather prefer *Triennial* Parliaments; but undoubtedly you, who have so thoroughly considered

considered the subject, are a much better judge than I can be.

I beg to be remembered to Mrs. Wyvill, and am,

Dear Sir,

Your's very sincerely,

RA. MILBANKE.

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LETTER XVII.

*From the* Rev. C. WYVILL *to* PHILIP FRANCIS, Esq.

BURTON-HALL, Jan. 13<sup>th</sup>, 1795.

Sir,

**N**O copy of the Paper dated Nov. 29<sup>th</sup>, has yet been given to any person not a Member of your Society, except Lord Stanhope. I think it might be of use to communicate it more extensively; but I shall not transmit it to any of my Friends in Yorkshire, or any Correspondents in other parts of the Country, till I hear whether you think it right. If it should meet with your approbation, I would without delay endeavour to collect the sense of the Yorkshire Gentlemen upon it, and also that of other Friends of Reform in different parts of the Country.

I am, Sir,

Your very faithful

and obedient servant,

C. WYVILL.

LETTER XVIII.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to RALPH  
MILBANKE, Esq.*

BURTON-HALL, Jan. 13th, 1795.

My Dear Sir,

IT gives me great satisfaction to find you approve the general outline I have ventured to submit to the judgment of your respectable Society. It were easy to criticise it in a theoretical view ; but our object is practical improvement to be obtained by general concurrence, and a peaceful, orderly application to Parliament. You tell me, you would prefer *Triennial* to *Annual* Parliaments. If that is the sentiment of your Society, I shall most readily agree to the substitution of that word ; and I really think it would be more generally liked in the Country. I ought in candour to add, however, that if a sufficient union can be effected for restoring Annual Parliaments after Elections have been purified in the manner suggested in the Resolutions, my opinion is in favour of Annual Parliaments ; but I should most willingly acquiesce in the change to *Triennial*, and should be more confident of its ready acceptance in Yorkshire.

I am, my dear Sir,

With great regard,

your's ever,

C. WYVILL.

LETTER

## LETTER XIX.

From PHILIP FRANCIS, Esq; to the Rev.  
C. WYVILL.

St. JAMES'S SQUARE, Jan. 20th, 1795.

Sir,

A GREAT deal of public business, accompanied with illness and anxiety, have hitherto prevented my acknowledging the favour of your letter of the 7th instant; as well as of another since received. You will see by the Newspapers that our Society came on Saturday last to a Resolution, which was carried almost unanimously in a very full Meeting, to suspend our proceedings for the present. I moved the question myself, and was warmly supported in it by many whom I know to be the most steadfast Friends of Reform, and among others by Mr. Erskine, Mr. Sheridan, Mr. Grey, and Mr. Lambton. I hope the Country in general will receive this Resolution of ours as a proof of our moderation and forbearance, and that it will vindicate our characters from the aspersions industriously thrown upon us, as if we had no object but to excite discontent, and to promote confusion. If that had been our disposition, we might undoubtedly have taken advantage of the calamities of the times, and not found it very difficult to turn them to a very mischievous account. For my own part, I thought the situation of public affairs so perilous and so unfit for the agitation of any internal question whatever, that I was determined, for one, not

to be a party, at the present moment, to any farther addresses either to the House of Commons or to the Nation, by which I was convinced that no good purpose could possibly be answered. By this determination of our Society, I am precluded from doing now, what I should otherwise have done at the last Meeting, I mean from submitting your proposed Resolutions to their consideration. But a time will come when these questions must be resumed, and with the melancholy, but powerful advantage of finding all men convinced, by their suffering and their danger, that the Nation is not, and cannot be safe with a House of Commons at the disposal of the Crown. The interval may be usefully employed in gaining the concurrence of as many individuals as our connexions and opportunities admit of. Your's, undoubtedly, are much more extensive than mine. Whether it will be prudent for you, at this time, to endeavour to take the sense of Bodies of Men collectively in your own Country, is a point on which you alone can form a proper judgment. In this quarter, supposing the thing practicable, I should be very much against it. You will find that the express description to which the right of voting is annexed in my plan, is that of Householders *paying Taxes*; all others are out of the question. When I say generally that the power and the property of the Country ought never to be separated, I think I go as far as a reasonable Proprietor can ask of me. To those who would place power in the hands of indigence,

gence, I say that power and property cannot be separated long. Sooner or later the power will take the property, and then what will they have gained but a temporary shifting of possession? \* At the same time we are not to forget that the little Proprietor is as much to be considered in the distribution of power as the greatest; perhaps more, because, individually, he is less able to defend himself. These are the principles on which I have acted. At first sight, it looks like bravery to run into extremes; but I am sure that to keep the middle path, and to be ready to encounter the violence of either side, or of both, when they unite, as they very often do, is the surest proof of political courage, as well as of public virtue. This was the station which the most upright and the most resolute of all the Romans thought it right to take in the Divisions of the Republic. Disdaining to court either the Nobility or the Populace, he adhered to the Common Wealth, and perished with it. And on this ground I would have had our Association take their stand, and never be driven from it, so that whether we succeeded or not, it might be said of us hereafter, "*hinc plebem, illinc optimates videbis; duos in medio relictos, Rempubicam et Catonem.*" † With these

\* These are the sentiments of a Politician who views the state of Society with the eye of a Philosopher, and would correct what needs correction by means at once moderate and efficacious. From the comprehensive views and benevolence of such Reformers, the inferior classes have every thing just and reasonable to hope, while the rich have nothing unreasonable and unjust to fear.

† This middle party who adhered to the principles of the Constitution in opposition to the factions in each extreme, who would have

these principles you ought not to doubt that I, for one, am disposed to be content with any scheme of Reform that would really and *bona fide* give us an independent House of Commons. To that practical object I am ready to surrender all my theories, if the plan I have proposed deserves that name, and no other. But then, on the other hand, I must expect that they who are governed by views of convenience and accommodation, and practical success, shall take care that what they do shall be really effectual to its purpose, that is, that it shall in fact give us a House of Commons and a Representation. To do less than that is not only to throw their efforts away in the immediate instance, but to make the case desperate; for, if for example, a great move should once be made without success, it is evident to my mind that the Nation never could be brought to make a second. In *your* conduct, Sir, and in the correspondence with which you have favoured me, I see nothing that does not entitle you to my confidence in your principles, as well as in your prudence. Your opinions are well considered, and delivered with great candour; but you must be sensible that your's is not likely to be the prevailing character and temper in a large Society.

I am, with the sincerest respect and esteem,

Sir, your most obedient,

and faithful, humble servant,

P. FRANCIS.

have destroyed the Crown, or annihilated the controuling power of Parliament, was more distinctly marked after the Minister Pitt had brought forward his Bill for restraining the fundamental Rights of Discussion and Petition by Meetings of the People.

LETTER

## LETTER XX.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to PHILIP  
FRANCIS, Esq.*

BURTON-HALL, Jan. 28th, 1795.

Sir,

I RECEIVED your favour of the 20th inst. with your Speech in Parliament on April 11th, 1793, inclosed, for which I am much obliged. I had before read it with perfect approbation, and I am persuaded, from what I at present know of your political views, from your speeches and writings, as well as from conversation in our interview in November last, that our sentiments would be found to coincide very nearly indeed, if there were an opportunity more fully to explain them.

Not having the smallest doubt in my mind that you, Sir, are most sincerely and zealously a friend to Political Reformation, and seeing not the least reason to doubt the sincerity of your Society in general, or of those worthy Members of it by whom your motion on the 17th was supported, I must own I heartily approve your resolution to suspend your operations for the present, and I think it impossible that any candid man can consider your advertisement as a proof of lukewarmness or tergiversation, or any prudent man with you had come to any immediate decision of the question before you, which, even if the Society had adopted the most limited principles which any of their friends had suggested, would have

have exposed them to be treated by Ministers, and other Enemies of Reform, as dangerous agitators of the public mind, an accusation which would have force at present, but will have totally lost it when national distress shall have pressed a little more severely on the feelings of the community.

I took the liberty to trouble you and the Society with my thoughts, because I understood you were preparing to settle the specific principles of your plan at a Meeting to be held on some day then not very distant, and because I conceived it to be my duty in that case to state how far I thought it likely that Yorkshire and the major part of the Counties might be expected to advance, in order to meet and unite with your Society. By that union, if it can be effected in time, I hope such a Reform as you and I would accept might be obtained, peacefully and quietly, which would preclude the hazards of a previous struggle, and prevent future attempts to overturn it by violence.

But I despair that such a necessary union can be formed on grounds so extensive as you have traced out; and were events beyond all expectation to produce that union, I still more despair that so great an alteration could be extorted from Parliament, without such a degree of compulsion as might eventually terminate in a Revolution.

This is precisely what I fear, and what I wish to be avoided; and it is in this view only that the Resolutions I have submitted to your Society, or the Pamphlet on the State of our  
 Repre-

Representation, on which the Resolutions in question were formed, can deserve your consideration.

Should the reasoning in favour of those limited propositions appear to your Committee so strong as to decide their opinion in favour of them, some time before they were referred to the Society at large, means might be used by confidential communications through the Kingdom, to prepare the Friends of Reform to unite *at a proper time* on that ground. But if from the zeal and more extensive expectations of the Society the Committee should in the first instance deem it expedient to occupy the ground which you have pointed out, in that case my hope of any peaceful Reform will very much depend on your prudence and influence with the Society, in concurrence with Mr. Erskine, Mr. Lambton, and the other Gentlemen who supported your late motion. Your more extensive plan might be held out to the Public with the express approbation of your Society, and yet a subsequent resolution might be adopted by it without any inconsistency, expressing their concurrence with Yorkshire, or their satisfaction in such limited plan as that County and the majority of other Counties might then have approved. In this way there seems to be a chance that a proper degree of union might be effected; but the other mode seems preferable, if the Committee could feel my reasoning to be sufficiently convincing. I am sorry for the mistake I made respecting the description of persons to which the right  
of

of voting is annexed in your plan. It was occasioned by my referring, not as I ought to have done to the plan itself, but to my imperfect recollection of it, and of our conversation on the subject some time before. But I hope you have already excused it; and I think it does not materially affect the reasoning of my letter.

I beg, Sir, you will accept my good wishes, which will attend you on all occasions; and

I am, with very great esteem,

Your most faithful

and obedient servant,

C. WYVILL.

## LETTER XXI.

*From* THOMAS BRAND HOLLIS, Esq; *to the*  
Rev. C. WYVILL.

Dear Sir,

**I** SHOULD have answered your favour sooner, but waited the Meeting of the Society, which has appointed a Committee to which your resolutions will be referred, and then reported to the General Extraordinary Meeting next Saturday, probably, if an address to the People is agreed upon, and there should be time. Permit me to say, the expectations of most people are much raised. Francis's plan rises in the opinion of many, though he does not admit Universal Suffrage, and against the Ballot.

It

It seems the People are more misinformed than truly informed!

I have inclosed your seal, that you may judge if the seal was perfect, as I suppose, for it was not so when it came to me; there is a defect in the impression towards the bottom of the seal.

I wished to have been in Town to have seen you when you was here. Correspondence is cut off, and indeed the confidence between man and man is weakened to the greatest degree.

I rejoice to hear you are well. Spirits depend upon the public welfare, which at present is much agitated. Peace most desirable. Is your Country of that disposition? I have much to say, but must be silent at present; only assuring you of my wishes for the continuance of your health, and that

I am, with great regard,

Most faithfully your's,

T. BRAND HOLLIS.

Jan. 13th, 1795.

## LETTER XXII.

From SAMUEL SHORE, Esq; to the Rev.

C. WYVILL

MEERSBROOK, Feb. 9th, 1795.

My Dear Sir,

**B**EFORE Mr. Walker quitted London, he sent me down a number of his last Publications, to distribute among some friends he mentioned,

mentioned, and among them was one which he desired me to forward to you with his respects.\*

I seize

\* Thomas Walker, Esq; of Manchester, the worthy brother-in-law of Mr. Shore, a zealous friend of Liberty, and a martyr in its cause. His vigour and ability in opposition to the first war with the French Republic, and in support of Political Reform, excited the animosity of his opponents, and provoked a vindictive Ministry to prosecute him with extreme rigour.

By the malice of his personal enemies, (in December, 1792) the populace of Manchester were irritated to a pitch of fury, which threatened the destruction of Mr. Walker and his family. Repeatedly was his house attacked by an enraged and intoxicated rabble, without interruption from the Civil Power of Manchester. The intrepidity of Mr. Walker, and of the generous friends who then assisted him to defend his house, alone defeated these outrageous attacks, and saved his house and his property, and the lives of himself and his family. Having thus repulsed the outrages of his personal adversaries, he had to sustain, in 1794, the more dangerous attack of his Ministerial Enemies in a Court of Justice.

But the charge of Treason was repelled by him with the clearest evidence; his innocence was fully established by the verdict of his jury, and he was declared from the Bench, by Mr. Justice Heath, the Judge before whom he was tried, to be honourably acquitted. In due time the perjured witness, who had been employed against him, was convicted of the perjury, and received the punishment appointed by law. But though these attempts to ruin this worthy Patriot, first by the violence of a lawless mob, after that by the testimony of a perjured witness, were thus defeated, he was unable to support himself against great commercial misfortunes, aggravated by the persecution of his enemies. Finding him embarrassed by his immense losses in Flanders, in consequence of the French Invasion of that Country, they basely contrived, by a combination of injuries, deeply affecting his mercantile credit, to frustrate every effort of this respectable Merchant to retrieve his affairs.

A generous Public interfered to restore Mr. Walker to a situation of comfort by a subscription, but with inadequate effect.—To his friend and eloquent advocate, Felix Vaughan, Esq; he is indebted for a legacy which now produces a small sum, not exceeding 32l. 10s. annually, but which, at the distance of 23 years, by the renewal of leases will be considerably augmented. For this testimony of Mr. Vaughan's affectionate regard, he is truly grateful, and the exalted character of his friend enhances the value of his gift. But the truth must not be concealed; this legacy, and the contribution of the Public, have not placed this worthy family

in

I seize this opportunity of thanking you for the two sets of your valuable three volumes, which came here in our absence, as we (both families) were on the Southern Coast the last Summer, and did not return till late in the Autumn, and which you were so obliging as to send one for my son, and one for me. It will be always a valuable collection, and the publication is in many respects well timed, though now active measures on the important Reform it relates to seem suspended. I have also my acknowledgments to make for the note accompanying some printed Resolutions, which were inclosed to me by Mr. Lindsey, as we have not yet been at Clapham this Winter. As I could not myself attend at the Meeting of the Friends of the People, I immediately returned

in a situation of comfort, and the enemies of Mr. Walker may still enjoy the cruel satisfaction of having succeeded in their malignant attempts.

His property and his peace of mind have been ruined alike, and the health of himself and his family has been injured or destroyed. He has received wounds which only can be closed by time and the consolations of Religion. Their lenient effect he knows is powerful, yet he dares not to hope it can be speedy.

But, Oh! fell Intolerance! whether the Votary of Religion or the Friend of Liberty be the object of thy persecution, how odious is thy malignity! How formidable is thy rage, and the ministers of thy wrath! How dost thou goad them to cruelty, and madden them with the bite of thy envenomed fangs! May the wise and virtuous of every class and description of men unite with increasing zeal to defeat thy fiend-like rancour, to punish with their severe contempt the executioners of thy vengeance, and to console their bleeding Victims with every possible reparation of their injuries. If the succours designed for the relief of these respectable Sufferers are irrecoverably lost, may fresh exertions of Benevolence repair what can be repaired, and effectually restore them to a situation of competence; and, in the mean time, may these sincere expressions of the esteem and sympathizing pity of one personally unknown, but no stranger to their merits and misfortunes, assuage, in some degree, the anguish of their wounds.

THE

the Resolutions to my worthy friend, Mr. Smith, with my sentiments upon them, which, as near as I recollect, were a full approbation of the extension of the Right of Suffrage, which I thought went as far as most people could wish, and in general of all the other propositions, except that I doubted on the acceptableness or propriety of allotting Members to the large Manufacturing Towns, on any scheme short of a general equal division, and that I thought you had left the scheme short in not providing for a gradual, and as it were almost imperceptible reduction, by purchase of all the remaining corrupt Boroughs, and of all in general where individual and corporate, but not public interest was the prevailing plan of Election. In consequence I deemed the Resolution approving the propositions too strong in its expressions.

It appears to me of the highest importance where a confessedly defective Reform is proposed, to provide at the same time for a gradual completion of it, otherwise the same battle is to fight over again, and the same, or perhaps stronger prejudices, to be a second time encountered. I take the liberty of suggesting this, as if it meets your ideas you may have an opportunity, by an additional proposition, of providing for a gradual amendment.

I suppose from the resolution of the Society, which I see in the Papers, that your propositions never came under the consideration of the Society, but of that resolution, or of the reasons for coming to it, I know nothing farther

ther than what has appeared in the public prints. I shall be obliged to you for a copy or two of the propositions, if you have any left. What think you, my dear Sir, of our calamitous situation? I fear the Country is doomed to suffer still heavier distresses, from the prevailing infatuation which appears to drive those infected with it to proceedings calculated to bring in the very danger they profess to be so anxious to shun. Though peace is now generally acknowledged to be desirable hereabouts, the disposition to petition for it is not equally prevailing. Our friend, Mr. Wilkinson, I am sorry to say, is cool in the business, if not against it; and I think at present it would not answer the end we could wish, for myself or any other who from the beginning has uniformly reprobated the war, and the consequent measures of Ministers, to take a lead in any such step. I sincerely congratulate you on the happy result of the late trial. My son joins me in every due remembrance to yourself and Mrs. Wyvill, not forgetting your little people, and I remain ever,

Dear Sir,

Most cordially your's,

SAM. SHORE.

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LETTER

LETTER XXIII.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to SAMUEL SHORE,*  
Esq.

BURTON-HALL, Feb. 21<sup>st</sup>, 1795.

My Dear Sir,

**I** NOW perform the promise which I made you yesterday, by sending you what I intend to insert as a tenth article in my proposal to your Society, if it meets your approbation. It was not overlooked by me, for you will find it mentioned in the State of Representation. But as any good which can be expected to arise from the adoption of these propositions by your Society will depend on the degree of unanimity with which they may be adopted by County Meetings, &c. (when the proper time for such Meetings is come,) I thought if your Society would agree to the propositions without this tenth article, a greater degree of unanimity at County Meetings might be hoped for than if the tenth article were added.\*

But if for want of this tenth article the other nine are likely to be rejected by your Society, I feel no hesitation to insert the tenth.

If the insertion of this article would take away your negative to the proposal, as it would then stand, I will send Mr. Francis a copy of my proposal thus amended. But if you think your other objection, respecting the

\* For this tenth article see the Preliminary Papers in this volume.

Manufacturing

Manufacturing Towns being unwilling to receive the Right of Representation, is so material that you cannot subscribe these ten articles, (as the matter appears to you at present) I think I can convince you that this second objection is really not a valid one, and I will keep back my amended copy till it has your entire concurrence, if I am fortunate enough to obtain it.

I am ever, dear Sir,

Cordially your's,

C. WYVILL.

#### LETTER XXIV.

*From* SAMUEL SHORE, Esq; *to the* Rev.

C. WYVILL.

MEERSBROOK, Feb. 26th, 1795.

My Dear Sir,

WE are on the point of setting out for Clapham; but I cannot omit to acknowledge, before we go, the receipt of your favour of the 21st, with its inclosures, and to return you my sincere thanks for them. The clause you propose to add is, as I recollect, in substance what you had mentioned before, and will, I think, be a valuable addition to the other resolutions. I do not know that it expresses precisely my idea, or will operate so as to obtain what I think most desirable, which is, that all private, individual, and corporate interests ought gradually to be abolished in the choice of Representatives. The first will

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naturally

naturally come within your proposed regulations, which go to the purchase of all the interests that are merely individual, where one person, or a very few, have the Burgage Tenures or the sole command of the Elections, and also where the Electors are few and poor, from the want of population, and consequently liable to easy corruption. But there are other respectable places, such as Bath, &c. &c. where the interests and controul is entirely corporate, that is, in the hands of twenty or forty persons, without the People having any thing to do with the Elections. Now might there not likewise be a provision to extend the right of Election in respectable towns or cities thus circumstanced by some such addition as this, which I submit to your consideration; and also for obtaining the voluntary surrender of all corporate rights of Election in populous respectable towns and cities where such are in the hands of a few persons, in order that the right of Suffrage may be duly extended among the inhabitants of these respectable places according to the tenour of the foregoing Resolutions. When individual and corporate interests in Elections are once got rid of, the remaining ones, being of a public nature, may be easily regulated so as to become most beneficial to the Public, because then all in the Community are concerned and interested to have this done. Perhaps it might be as well to omit in your Resolution the words, "pursuant to the suggestion of Mr. Pitt in 1785," and the concluding ones "without any future interposition of the People." The Resolution  
stands

stands quite as well without them, and perhaps, with some, the mention of Mr. Pitt, may not be much relished, and the argument against him, should he oppose, will be equally strong, though the notice of that circumstance be not in the Resolution. The Resolution at the end, I think, would stand a better chance of passing with unanimity in our Society, if not quite so particular, but if it run more generally in some such way as this: Resolved, that this Society would highly approve the establishment of these Regulations by Act of Parliament, and would with gratitude accept the same as a just and substantial Reform in the Representation of the People.

You will, my dear Sir, excuse my freedom on this occasion; but on such an important subject I think it right to be quite open in suggesting whatever appears material in the pursuit and accomplishment of a matter of such moment to the Public welfare.

If the large Manufacturing Towns themselves do not object to the regulation concerning them, I think with you that it is not for others to object, and therefore I would myself agree to it. I shall be glad to hear from you at Clapham, and remain,

Dear Sir,

Very truly and cordially your's,

S. SHORE.

P. S. I fear there is not that disposition in the Counties to come forward, on any plan of Reform, which you seem to suppose.

## LETTER XXV.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to SAMUEL  
SHORE, Esq.*

BURTON-HALL, March 2d, 1795.

My Dear Sir,

**I**N conformity with your wish I have struck out of the additional article the words at the conclusion, which you objected to, viz. "without any future interposition of the People." The other alteration in it which you suggested, viz. to strike out the reference to Mr. Pitt, I have no objection to admit, if the proposition should appear to the Society better without it. But I rather wish it to go to them for their opinion, because it seems to me an advantage of no small importance to the Common Cause, to mark as strongly as possible the coincidence of our plan in the most material parts of its outline with that of Mr. Pitt, and to preserve the resemblance between them as much as we can; and though the tenth article is not a proposition of the most considerable importance, it still helps to keep up a degree of conformity which may be useful. With the correction above stated I have inserted the tenth article in a fresh manuscript copy of the Resolutions, and sent it to Mr. Francis to be communicated instead of the former copy to the Society.

And since I transmitted the enlarged Resolutions to Mr. Francis, it has occurred to me that your objection respecting the abolition of the usurped powers of such Corporations as  
those

those of Bath, Bury, &c. may be easily removed by a short addition of little more than half a dozen words at the end of the sixth article, viz, " in Elections for the district or place in which the Copyhold Estate or House of every such Copyholder or Householder may respectively be situated." This was the meaning of the sixth article; but it will be better to express that meaning more distinctly, and the words above, I think, will be satisfactory to you. To prevent mistake, I shall inclose for you a copy of the Resolutions as sent to Mr. Francis, with the proposed amendment of the sixth article, and a similar copy also to Mr. W. Smith, under cover to whom your's will be sent. And if you and Mr. Smith should be completely satisfied with my proposal in its improved state, I shall be very happy indeed, as I shall then begin to see some chance of general union, without which the efforts of any detached Society, however respectable, must be fruitless.

I fear, as you do, we must suffer still more before the Counties will petition for Peace or Reformation; but the present measures must more and more distress the Country, and before this time twelve months, I calculate, the War and its Supporters will be sufficiently unpopular.

I hope you and Mrs. Shore had a good journey to Clapham, and are in perfect health, notwithstanding the severity of this long winter.

I am ever, my dear Sir,

Most truly your's,

C. WYVILL.

LETTER XXVI.

*From the* Rev. C. WYVILL *to* PHILIP FRANCIS,  
Esq.

BURTON-HALL, Feb. 28th, 1795.

Sir,

**F**ROM farther reflection on the Resolutions submitted through you to the consideration of your Society, and from correspondence with your associate, and my worthy friend Mr. Shore, I am induced to enlarge my proposal by inserting an additional article, which you will find in the inclosed paper. I therefore beg leave to withdraw the Resolutions as they stand in the paper dated November 29th, 1794, and to substitute in their place the enlarged Resolutions dated this day, which I should be happy to find appear to you improved by the addition, and likely to meet the approbation of the Society.

I am, Sir, with most sincere respect and esteem,

Your faithful and obedient servant,

C. WYVILL.

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LETTER XXVII.

*From* PHILIP FRANCIS, Esq; *to the* Rev.  
C. WYVILL.

7th May, 1795.

Sir,

**H**AVING unfortunately mislaid the last copy of amended Resolutions, which you sent me in your letter of the 28th of February,

February, I request you will be so good as to send me another, as we shall soon have a Meeting, at which I propose to submit it to the consideration of the Society.

I am, Sir, your most obedient,  
humble servant,

P. FRANCIS.

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### LETTER XXVIII.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to SAMUEL  
SHORE, Esq.*

BURTON-HALL, June 26th, 1795.

My Dear Sir,

**I** AM much obliged to you for your account of the late Proceedings of the Society, the Friends of the People; and I have much satisfaction in hearing that they have limited their Plan of Reformation, as it respects the extension of the Right of Suffrage to Householders paying Taxes. I cordially agree with them in thinking *that* the proper principle of Suffrage in the present state of Society, and in wishing to postpone Universal Suffrage till knowledge as well as property has been more generally diffused, and our Populace may be more safely trusted with the care of their own political interests, as well as those of their Fellow Citizens. I am sorry, however, but not surprised to hear, that the Society have agreed with Mr. Francis that they ought to contend for the very extensive changes which he some time ago suggested.

gested, in the Districts and Places which have the Right of returning Members to Parliament. Elections in the Counties, the Metropolis, and some other great Towns, are tolerably, and might be unexceptionably conducted, if but a few simple regulations were introduced in the mode of Election; and then by adding to the weight of the Counties, &c. in the scale of Representation in the manner proposed by Mr. Pitt in 1785, and abolishing a certain considerable number of the most objectionable Boroughs, I really think as much would be gained for Public Liberty as we have any prospect of obtaining without a civil war. As long as there may appear to be a probability that a gradual and moderate Reformation may be effected by peaceful and inoffensive means, so long shall I think it my duty to adhere to the less extensive Propositions of Mr. Pitt in substance; though not unwilling to admit a more extended application of his principles than he formerly proposed, or would now consent to.

If the rashness and infatuation of Ministers should unhappily produce commotions in the Country, my ideas of what Propositions ought to be adopted by the Friends of Political Reformation would probably be changed: I might then think Mr. Francis's plan, or still more extensive measures ought to be held out to the Public. But as matters stand at present, or are likely to stand, my opinion is, that it would have been better for the Cause of Liberty and Reformation if your Society had

had taken lower ground. I wish the Society may, at some future Meeting, come down to a level with Yorkshire.\*

I am ever, my dear Sir,

Cordially your's,

C. WYVILL-

\* To be zealous without enthusiasm, and cautious without timidity, are the most essential qualities in the character of a Reformer. He who wants zeal and courage will rarely engage in the task to correct public abuses, and he will still more rarely engage in it with effect. He may distinctly perceive that abuses exist, that they have spread the poison of corruption through every rank of his fellow-citizens, and that Reform alone can prevent the ruin of his Country, as the necessary consequence of still-accumulated abuses and corruption unchecked by timely remedies. He may think justly, he may be speculatively right, his wishes may be on the side of Virtue and rational Reform, but he cannot act with vigour; sunk in cowardly inactivity, he will exert no effort, he will hazard no disadvantage; he will dare to attempt nothing, because usually in such struggles nothing can be accomplished with ease; or if the prospect of success, with little trouble and no danger, should prompt him to concur in some laudable and moderate plan of Reform, he will abandon the cause he approves, on the appearance of unexpected opposition, of difficulties not foreseen, or of hazards magnified by his timidity. On the other hand, he who engages in the task of Reform, if he is daring and enthusiastic, will scorn all prudential considerations as the pitiful suggestions of fear or treachery; he will pass the boundaries which a wise and honest policy would prescribe; he will attempt what no efforts could accomplish, and expose his Country to the incalculable evils of a Revolution, to attain little more than might have been attained by regular and legal means. And the same rashness and enthusiasm, which may have prompted him to plunge his Country into the miseries of a civil war, will too probably impel him to continue it, in a vain and delusive pursuit of impracticable good, till the opportunity to rescue his Country from impending ruin, and close the unhappy contest with some advantage, will be irretrievably lost. But each of these pernicious extremes will be shunned with care by him whose zeal is unmixed with enthusiasm, and whose caution is unsuggested by fear. He will endeavour, conscientiously and with unshaken perseverance, to serve his Country, but he will never forsake the maxims of a virtuous prudence; he will pursue Reform, but he will never forget that Revolutions, though usually begun by the rashness of well-intending individuals, have generally been finished, after a series of inconceivable calamities, in the disappointment of every friend of our species, and the establishment of tyranny under an ambitious and successful General.

The

That the Society of the Friends of the People was formed on views of public good, and in the spirit of honest, intrepid, and judicious patriotism, cannot justly be doubted. That the principal Members of the Society were more particularly distinguished by the spirit here recommended is evident from their measures. On the one hand, their energetic support of the cause of Political Reform, in opposition to a corrupt and domineering Administration, under every possible discouragement, during the strong delusion of the times, proves that they would not consent to surrender the National Rights, or tamely submit to the continuance of a merely nominal Representation of the People. And, on the other hand, their declining to adopt the Right of Universal Suffrage, and their successfully recommending to the Society the more limited principle of Suffrage, proposed before by Mr. Pitt, proves that they wished to correct the frauds which have so nearly vested in the Crown an absolute power, with moderation, though with vigour and efficacy.

The numerous Papers of the Society, their Petition to Parliament, their Declarations and Addresses to the Public, all breathe the same spirit of temperate Patriotism, and of attachment to Liberty on the principles of the Constitution. On the good sense and spirit of the British People they relied for support, and by their legal interposition, and the influence of the public opinion, without violence, without the hazards of a Revolution, they trusted that the condition of the People might be meliorated, and the Constitution might be restored by a radical Reform, through the consent of Parliament itself. Their plan of Reform, though similar in principle, was indeed less limited in its application than that proposed by Mr. Pitt in 1785, partly from their caution to avoid the disunion of their Members, partly from the politic view, perhaps, to postpone concessions and limitations, till it became probable that with such limitations and concessions the establishment of their plan might be obtained. And in such circumstances, no doubt, they would have gladly secured the substantial benefits of their plan, by yielding to those conciliatory restrictions of its principle, which some of their friends had, perhaps, prematurely advised.

If farther means of justification are wanted to prove the rectitude of the Society's principles, and the moderation of their views, they may be found in the Correspondence comprised in this Number.

The Editor commits with pleasure to the press the letters written to him by several principal Friends of the People, not doubting, that, on a candid and attentive perusal, they will furnish additional proofs, to the Reader still open to conviction, that the leading Members, and consequently the Society itself, are justly intitled to the praise of a virtuous zeal for Liberty, duly tempered by judgment and caution.

NUMBER

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NUMBER VIII.

*Containing the EDITOR's Correspondence respecting a Meeting of the County of York, held on the 1st day of December, 1795, chiefly with a view to oppose certain obnoxious Bills then depending in Parliament; and also respecting similar Meetings of the Counties of Durham and Northumberland.*

LETTER I.

*From Sir THOMAS GASCOIGNE, Bart. and other Gentlemen, communicating a Requisition to the Sheriff of Yorkshire, to the Rev. C. WYVILL.*

Sir,

**C**ONCEIVING the public measures now pursuing to require the most serious attention, and having consulted several respectable Freeholders who concur with us in thinking an early Meeting of the County, at this particular crisis, very desirable, we beg leave to transmit the annexed intended Requisition for your consideration, and, if approved, you will please to sign the same, and return it immediately, either to Mr. Townend or Mr. Wolley, in York, to be forwarded by express to the High Sheriff, and if he should refuse to appoint

appoint a Meeting, in that case to give your authority for calling one, for the purposes specified in the Requisition, at York, on Tuesday, the first day of December, next, at Eleven o'clock, provided fifty Gentlemen agree to join in such Requisition; and we hope you will do us the favour to meet at Ringrose's the preceding day, to consider what is most proper to be proposed to the Meeting.

We have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most humble

and very obedient servants,

*Tho. Gascoigne,*

*S. F. Barlow,*

*G. A. Chetwynd Stapylton,*

*John Raper,*

*Rob. Sinclair,*

*Wm. Carr,*

*John Milnes.*

YORK, Nov. 14th, 1795.

P. S. If any Gentlemen in your neighbourhood, to whom application has not been made, approve of the measure, you will be so obliging as procure their signatures.

\* Of the Bills here alluded to, the first was introduced to the House of Peers, on the 6th of November, 1795, by Lord Grenville; and it contained clauses altering the Law of Treason, under which our Monarchs from Edward the Third to the present King had been protected against Plots and Conspiracies, and establishing a train of Constructive Treasons and High Misdemeanors, vaguely and indefinitely described as Acts tending to excite hatred and contempt of his Majesty's Person, and the Established Government and Constitution of this Realm: The other was introduced to the House of Commons, on the 10th of November, 1795, by Mr. Pitt, and it contained regulations limiting that Right of the People to meet and discuss public grievances, and to petition for redress, which they had enjoyed from time immemorial, and which, after the last King of the Stuart line had been expelled, partly on account of his infraction of this Right, had been secured to the Nation for ever, as our ancestors hoped, by the Bill of Rights, that compact which formed the foundation of the New Government, and on which rests the Right of the present Royal Family to the Throne of this Kingdom.

The

## LETTER II.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILLE to Sir THOMAS GASCOIGNE, Bart.*

BURTON-HALL, Nov. 16<sup>th</sup>, 1795.

Sir,

I HAVE returned the Requisition with my signature annexed. I would apply to several Gentlemen in this neighbourhood, if I were not inclined to think it might have a

The Ministers, daring as they were, probably would have feared to propose, and the Parliament, though then servilely obsequious to their wishes, would have scrupled to ratify such measures, if the loyalty and indignation of the Public had not been roused to an extraordinary pitch of fervour by an outrageous tumult, excited by the rabble in the streets of London, as the King, with the usual solemnity was passing, on the 29<sup>th</sup> of October, 1795, to the House of Peers, to open the Session of Parliament. The insult on the person of the Monarch was truly detestable, and they who were guilty of that abominable outrage deserved the most exemplary punishment: and if the laws could justly be thought not to have provided sufficient security to the person of the Sovereign, the Legislature with propriety might have curbed the insolence and audacity of men disposed to repeat such outrages, by ordaining still severer punishment for a crime so enormous. The personal safety of the King could demand nothing more from Parliament; and nothing more should have been asked by men, of whom it may be truly said, that, on this occasion, they wanted vigilance to prevent a crime which the laws did not want power to punish with severity. But far more extensive changes for the restriction of Popular Rights had been meditated for some time, probably, by our ambitious Ministers. They were now prompted to effect them alike by interest and resentment, at once to flatter the Court, and to subdue the spirit of the People: and they immediately availed themselves of the opportunity which this tumult had so unfortunately offered. The obnoxious Bills were hurried through each House of Parliament with unusual rapidity; and on the 18<sup>th</sup> of December, 1795, they received the Royal Assent; but not before Petitions against them signed by 131,284 persons, had been presented to Parliament. Counter Petitions, approving these Bills, had also been presented, containing signatures, however, not exceeding 29,922.

See the History of two Acts, &c. published by Robinsons, London.

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better

better effect to make the application when more names have been subscribed. I should be glad, therefore, to receive fresh copies of the Requisition, as speedily as possible, with such additional signatures as you may have obtained. \*

I will certainly attend the previous Meeting ; and I have the honour to be,

Sir, your most obedient  
humble servant,

C. WYVILL.

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### LETTER III.

*From WILLIAM SMITH, Esq; M. P. to the  
Rev. C. WYVILL.*

Dear Sir,

**I** CANNOT refrain from addressing you on the subject of the present measures of Government, when I am informed that they are to be taken into public consideration in Yorkshire

\* On the Editor's application, on the 17th of November, to his friends, John Yarker, Esq; and his worthy son, the Rev. Luke Yarker, Rector of Fingal, (now, alas! no more) their signatures were added to the Requisition, with their accustomed spirit and zeal in the Cause of Constitutional Freedom, without waiting for a longer list of subscribers annexed to the Requisition. They also concurred with the Editor in signing a Paper, to be sent to Sir T. Gascoigne, declaring their opinion, that in case the High Sheriff should refuse to call a Meeting of the County of York, in compliance with the Requisition annexed, it would be proper to call a Meeting of the County for the purposes specified in the said Requisition without the High Sheriff's authority, and requesting that their names might be put to the advertisement to be published for calling such Meeting on the first day of December next, provided fifty Gentlemen agreed to the measure.

*John Yarker,  
Luke Yarker,*

*G. Wyvill.*

Yorkshire on Monday next. To dwell on their spirit and tendency, would be folly and presumption, when it is to you that I am writing. But let me, my dear Sir, urge on you the importance of attending the Meeting in as much force as may be, and of pressing the matter home with all that strength of argument, and authority too, of which no man is more capable than yourself. To Yorkshire Reformers (if such yet remain) surely it is impossible that application can be made, ineffectually, to induce them to oppose Bills, by which their hands must be fettered for so long a time as shall please their Antagonists. But I need not enlarge; your time is precious, and I just now have not leisure to trespass uselessly on you. Our success about London, which has been abundant and decisive, affords, I think, a good omen for the Country. I have no doubt of your attendance and exertions, and shall only say, "I, pede fausto." \* Believe me, dear Sir,

Very sincerely your's,

WM. SMITH.

PARK STREET, WESTMINSTER,  
25th Nov. 1795.

\* On this trying occasion the Capital was honourably distinguished by its zeal to prevent these dangerous innovations; and the example of the Capital was followed by a majority of the principal Towns throughout Great Britain. The Counties, it must be owned, were less sagacious in discovering the tendency of these Bills; or if they discerned their pernicious consequences, they manifested in opposition to them less of that manly independent spirit which characterised the Towns. The inspection of the subjoined Table will instantly prove the truth of this acknowledgment:

Counties which petitioned against the Bills	} 9	Counties which petitioned for the Bills	} 7
Towns which petitioned against the Bills	} 62	Towns which petitioned for the Bills	} 33

## LETTER IV.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to WILLIAM  
WILBERFORCE, Esq.*

BURTON-HALL, Dec. 3d, 1795.

My dear Sir,

**I** TAKE the earliest opportunity, after my return home, to state to you, that on coming into the Guild-Hall at York, on Tuesday last, I did observe that a considerable number of the persons there assembled were livery servants, and other persons, who, from their dress, appearance, and behaviour, I judged not to be Freeholders of the County of York \*. I conceived that at a Meeting of the

In Yorkshire, however, these measures of Ministers were supported by a more powerful majority of the Merchants, &c. at Leeds, Wakefield, Bradford, &c. than of the Landed Gentlemen. This fact presents an anomaly which the Editor will not attempt to explain.

\* From the absence of a great majority of the Freeholders, and from other circumstances stated in this letter, it appeared probable to the Editor's Friends, and he concurred in their opinion, that if a Meeting of the County were called afresh, on some day sufficiently distant to afford an opportunity for explaining the tendency of the Bills in question more fully to the Freeholders, their sense would be found adverse to the innovations proposed, especially, if to those who might attend the Meeting in opposition to the Bills, means were taken to add the absent Freeholders, by collecting their signatures to the Petition adopted at the second Meeting of the County. But properly to execute this plan, would have required more time than the hasty manner in which the Bills were hurried through Parliament would have allowed: and after the Bills had passed through all the forms of the Legislature, their legal effect was immediate; and any attempt to procure the repeal of the pernicious Acts by Popular interference, would have been attended with insuperable difficulties. Candour, however, requires the Editor to add, that he, and other adversaries of these Bills, on this occasion may have formed an erroneous estimate of the sentiments of this County. He and they may have been misled by their recollection

the Freeholders into which so many unqualified persons had intruded themselves, and who manifested an indisposition to listen to what any Gentleman on either side might advance on the important subject intended to be laid before the Meeting; no fair and orderly debate, no free and reasonable discussion could take place. I therefore stated to you, as I doubt not you will recollect, in the short conference you honoured me with at my request, that for these reasons, and from my earnest wish that all disorder might be avoided, I requested that you and the Gentlemen who thought with you, would leave the Hall to the Gentlemen who had called the Meeting at that place. To this proposition you did not immediately assent; but on your return to the Hustings, finding that several of your friends had left, or were preparing to leave the Guild-Hall and go to the Castle of York, you repaired thither with them.

recollection of the zeal formerly displayed in Yorkshire for Political Reform, and by their expectation, that men who had struggled hard before to meliorate the Constitution, would not then endure the violation of the fundamental compact on which it is established. The powerful influence and the weight of character of Lord Rockingham and Sir George Savile had been lost to the People and their Cause, and on this emergency the loss was deeply felt. In the course of fifteen years the Association for Reform had been weakened by the mortality of its Members, and the dissension which had arisen on subjects comparatively unimportant; and its Committee had sunk into a state of inefficiency and virtual dissolution. Hence it may be suspected, and subsequent events will be found, perhaps, to confirm the suspicion, that no exertions would have been successful in Yorkshire to defend the Rights of the Nation thus attacked, against the personal efforts of Mr. Wilberforce, whose influence was then very considerable, aided by the power of Ministers which had received from the War an incalculable augmentation, and still more assisted by the panic fear by which the multitude of well-intending individuals were deluded at that time, and terrified into reluctant acquiescence.

I understood your unwillingness to leave the Guild-Hall, and go the Castle of York, to arise from your desire that the merits of the intended questions might be fully and freely discussed, which I also wished, but thought it impracticable in a Meeting composed in the manner which I have stated. It is matter of sincere satisfaction to me, therefore, that the separation did take place, and consequently, that all farther symptoms of disorder and irregularity were happily avoided. But as the refusal of the Gentlemen by whom the Meeting was called to quit the place, in which, pursuant to their advertisement, they were assembled, was considered as I have reason to believe by those Gentlemen who re-assembled with you at the Castle, as having proceeded from *their fear* to meet a fair and free discussion of their questions; I beg leave to assure you that any such suggestion, whether it has been made in York Castle, or may be advanced in St. Stephen's Chapel, is altogether unfounded. And I rely upon your candour to take some proper opportunity publicly to state this matter in its true light, either in the House of Commons or elsewhere. I anxiously wish for another and fuller Meeting than those on Tuesday last, at which, from the best information I have received, the whole number of Freeholders present in the Guild-Hall and the Castle of York did not exceed eighteen hundred, not a tenth part of the whole body of Freeholders of this County. I do sincerely wish for such a Meeting of the County, if it could be held before

before a change in our ancient laws had taken place; but that I fear is impossible.

I am, with great personal regard,

Dear Sir,

Ever sincerely your's,

C. WYVILL.

P. S. Copies of this letter will be sent to Mr. H. Duncombe, Mr. Peirse, &c. of course it is to be considered as a public letter. \*

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### LETTER V.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to Sir THOMAS  
GASCOIGNE, Bart. †*

BURTON-HALL, Dec. 31<sup>st</sup>, 1795.

My Dear Sir,

**I** REALLY was so much pressed for time on Thursday, that I could not possibly save the post, but by sending the copy of my letter to Mr. Wilberforce without a line addressed to yourself. I wish you to shew that letter to Mr. Peirse and Sir Wm. Milner, and have no objection to its being seen by any other Gentleman. But though I have told Mr. Wilberforce that it is to be taken as a public letter, yet I beg it to be understood as a letter

\* Mr. Wilberforce's answer to this letter has been preserved; but the Editor did not think it necessary to request his permission to publish it.

† The Chairman of the County Meeting at York, on the 1<sup>st</sup> of December, 1795, honourably distinguished on that occasion by the firmness and propriety of his conduct, and by his zealous attachment at all times to the Cause of Liberty, and the Constitution of our Country.

not meant to be published, but only to be shewn without reserve. I wish to avoid giving Mr. Wilberforce the smallest degree of pain personally, though no one more warmly reprobates his late political conduct, or more earnestly wishes it may be reprobated by the County than I do.

I am, &c.

C. WYVILL.

## LETTER VI.

*From JOHN RALPH FENWICK, Esq; to the  
Rev. C. WYVILL.*

My Dear Sir,

**I**T gives me great pleasure to find that your extensive and opulent County is beginning to recover from its lethargy, and that we are likely to see you once more in the important station which you filled with so much credit, when a former corrupt Ministry made it necessary for the People to associate for redress. If the Nation should succeed in its opposition to the intended violation of our Constitution, a new æra will, I trust, open upon us, and remedies be applied to the many wounds our Liberties have received since the commencement of the present system of coercion; but if all opposition prove (as I fear it will) ineffectual, the consciousness of having done our utmost to avert the evils of our Country, and of not being willing slaves, will be our only consolation. We intended to move in this  
City,

City, but our Mayor is a creature of the Church, and some men from whom we expected a bold and honest conduct, shewed so much indifference, that we found it prudent to desist from our intentions. We have still hopes that the County may meet for the purpose of addressing his Majesty, and that we may be able to carry a proper amendment; at least, if it does meet, we will attempt to do so. I much fear that in our leading men there is a want of activity and vigilance in this business, for the bulk of the People are evidently with us. Should they neglect the opportunity, their opponents may either defer the County Meeting until the Bills have passed into Laws, or by convening the County for the sole purpose of a *loyal* Address, be enabled to repel any amendment on the mere question of order.

You will probably have heard from Mr. T. Bigge that a Petition to the three branches of the Legislature against the Bills has passed at Newcastle. Their proceedings have been vigorous and temperate, the success greater than the most sanguine expected, and the signatures supposed to be near *seven thousand*. The Corporation have set on foot a Counter-Petition, to which, after lying two days, one hundred and fifty names have been affixed!

This is comfortable; and yet as it is now the fashion to consider the bulk of the People as *nobody*, we shall perhaps hear from high authority that the measures of Ministry were approved by a majority. The County of Northumberland meets on Wednesday, at the request

request of the Magistrates, to address his Majesty, and an amendment will be made, I hope, by our friend at Benton. The concurrence of people will be immense, and Mr. Bigge does not feel that confidence in himself which every one else does in him.

From this alone arises my fear of success; but the importance of the subject will, I trust, rouse him, and make him superior to his apprehensions.

You will be informed of the result of the Meeting; there will probably be a secession of the Magistrates and their party. I hope Mrs. Wyvill and your family are perfectly well.

And am, with great respect,

Very sincerely your's,

J. R. FENWICK.\*

DURHAM, Nov. 22d, 1795.

## LETTER VII.

From THOMAS BIGGE, Esq; to the Rev.  
C. WYVILL.

BENTON, Wednesday Night,  
25th Nov. 1795.

Dear Sir,

I HAVE just returned from the County Meeting at Morpeth, where, notwithstanding the hostility of the Sheriff, every thing has been carried with a very high hand. The Sheriff who called the Meeting at the Requi-

\* The Editor's letters to his excellent friends, Dr. Fenwick and Mr. Bigge, on the subject of their last four letters in this Number, have not been preserved.

sition of several Magistrates for the purpose of voting a congratulatory address to the King, after much previous debate was prevailed upon to hold it in the open Market Place, the Hall not being able to contain 300 persons, whereas near 5000 were assembled. As soon as the address was read, which was done in so low a tone of voice that not one single person could hear it, the Sheriff (knowing an amendment would be moved) abruptly quitted his stand, and retired to the inn. Sir John E. Swinburne was then called to the Chair; and a loyal address to the King, petitions to both Houses of Parliament, and strong resolutions declaratory of Constitutional Rights were severally moved, the greatest temper and decorum prevailing during the whole business. Copies of the address and petitions had been printed and copiously distributed before the Meeting, that every person might have leisure to judge of their contents. Only three hands were held up against the former; the others passed unanimously. A resolution of thanks was also voted to Mr. Grey, with instructions to him and his Colleague, Beaumont, to oppose the Bills strenuously. From all I can observe, these Bills are more detested by the People the more they are understood by them. This circumstance gives me reason to augur well of the success of your Meeting at York; for if we could procure so unanimous a declaration of popular opinion at a County Meeting held in the Borough of Morpeth, where the influence of a Ministerial Peer is very considerable,

derable, what have you to apprehend from a full assemblage of the Freeholders of your County, held in the City of York?

I saw this morning a letter from our excellent friend, Dr. Fenwick, which gives me hopes that the County of Durham will meet the ensuing week \*, and that notwithstanding the influence of a powerful and wealthy chapter, the Cause of Freedom will prevail.

I pray God most earnestly that your exertions may be crowned with the success they deserve, and that your character may rise with a still brighter lustre than ever, from having been a while obscured under the cloud of prejudice. "Magna est Veritas, et prevalebit."

Your's, most sincerely,

THO. BIGGE.

### LETTER VIII.

*From JOHN RALPH FENWICK, Esq; to the  
Rev. C. WYVILL.*

My Dear Sir,

**I** AM very sorry that your success at York has not been more complete, and yet, considering the state of things in your County not a twelvemonth ago, there is perhaps no

\* In opposition to the two unconstitutional Bills already so often censured, the Meetings at Morpeth and Durham were those County Meetings which were conducted with the greatest ability and success. An account of the Proceedings at each of those Meetings may be found among the Papers prefixed to the series of Letters in this volume.

great

great reason to complain. Could we then have obtained a Petition for Peace, we should have deemed it a signal triumph, and now your very opponents are compelled to annex that Petition to their other detestable measure, in order to make it palatable.

Still the evil is a great one, and the reflection that so considerable a portion of our greatest County is capable of sanctioning so detestable a proceeding, is ground for the most serious alarm.

Our Landed Proprietors seem determined to shut their eyes to every danger, but that of Democracy. What can your friend Mr. Wilberforce mean by so strange a conduct? Mr. Bigge informed you of the event of our Meeting; the success was as perfect as the absence of our opponents would permit. It argues indeed no great confidence in their strength, that the Minister's Friends should not have dared to face the Requisition even in the absence of Mr. Lambton, Milbanke, and Sir H. V. Tempest, who in this instance strongly opposes the Minister. It must not, however, be concealed that their party is truly formidable, being made up of the Bishop and the Church, and their numerous adherents, of the bulk of the Country Gentlemen, of the Ship-Holders, who are amassing unprecedented fortunes from the lavish contracts of Government, and of the numerous friends of Mr. Burdon, who is highly popular in the County. Such a body of influence, if ably conducted, would, I fear, not be easily overcome. They were good enough, however, to decline the contest,

contest. The independent part of the community are, I think, undoubtedly with us, but many of them so completely despair of redress, that they have unadvisedly declined joining us on that principle. From this circumstance, from the shortness of the time allowed, and the unwearied attempts of our adversaries, I am afraid our signatures will not be very numerous, yet I hope they will be sufficiently so to be respectable.

I remain, Sir,

With the greatest respect,

Your's sincerely,

J. R. FENWICK.

DURHAM, Dec. 3d, 1795.

## LETTER IX.

From THOMAS BIGGE, Esq; to the Rev.

C. WYVILL.

BENTON, Dec. 7th, 1795.

My Dear Sir,

**I** HAVE to thank you for two letters, the last of which, though it failed to announce that decisive success so ardently wished for by your friends, and so justly merited by your own strenuous exertions in this best of Causes, did not, however, fail to communicate to me the agreeable sensations under which it was apparently written. That in spite of such opposition you have been able to make so considerable an effort, is a fact of unquestionable

able importance, and it is more gratifying to learn that a future, more prepared, and better concerted attempt may be expected to produce consequences favourable to the recovery of Popular Rights. I hope too that a spirit of generous resentment will at the ensuing Election rouse the independent Freeholders of your County to attempt the removal of one whose delusion or insincerity renders him a dangerous instrument in the hands of such a Minister as Mr. Pitt.

When I read your Hand-Bill \*, I did expect that you would be branded with the term Traitor, for the use of an epithet which is both innocent and appropriate; and it shews the miserable weakness of their cause, that they have no other means of discrediting a constitutional doctrine than by calumniating the best men who profess it. Silent contempt,

\* For this Hand-Bill, and for the Editor's Speeches at the County Meeting at York, on the 1st of December, 1795, see the Preliminary Papers of this volume. The Hand-Bill was approved and adopted by Friends in other Counties, whose prudence and moderation are unquestionable; but from the adversaries of the Rights of the People, both in the Country, and in Parliament, it received the most malignant, and the Editor may be permitted to add, the most absurd construction, as a Treasonable Paper, instigating the People to forcible resistance. At this distance of time (February, 1804) the rage of the Monarchal Zealots has subsided with their fears; and even they, perhaps, will now acknowledge that for this charge the Paper affords no foundation. Yet that Mr. Pitt, at the time when this charge was urged in Parliament by one of his most passionate supporters, discountenanced it with very significant marks of his disapprobation, the Editor believes is true; and he records it as a fact which proves the superior judgment and candour of the Minister. The Editor himself was prompted to oppose his measures by no motive of personal ill-will to Mr. Pitt; he acted from other considerations; and he has the satisfaction to acknowledge that the conduct of Mr. Pitt to him has always been free, as he believes, from the meanness of personal animosity.

as you observe, is the best answer to such attacks. Their poisoned weapons will recoil upon those who use them, unable to penetrate the adamantine shield of Virtue and Truth. I honestly believe that our Cause will be finally promoted by these malevolent outrages, and particularly when persons of distinguished honour and integrity are selected as the objects of them. Rage and persecution can never make converts.

I ordered the Newcastle Chronicle of last Saturday to be directed to you, and I hope you have received it. It contains a very accurate account of the Debate at Durham, taken down in short hand by Mr. Turner, a Dissenting Clergyman at Newcastle, a man of very excellent character, and liberal attainments. In the Government Paper (the Courant) the same Debate has been most partially reported, and to shew the credit of their statement, I need only say, that Dr. Fenwick is described as speaking with his "*usual candour,*" in Italics. What are you inclined to think of those who insinuate a perpetual want of candour in that incomparable Patriot? A person whose integrity, judgment, and candour are universally acknowledged. But the effect of that speech could not but excite the spleen of the disappointed. The elegance, the urbanity, the persuasiveness of our friend upon that occasion, and still more than all, the affecting sensibility of his manner produced such bursts of warm and affectionate applause, that if he had an uncandid adversary present, it was not to be expected that his

his disappointment could shew itself, except by anonymous misrepresentations.

Our Northumberland Address, praying for the Royal Negative, has been presented at St. James's by Mr. Grey. The King received it very graciously.

He has now the opportunity of becoming the most powerful and popular Monarch in the World. But the determined spirit of the Minister precludes all hope of this odious measure being abandoned. That his transcendent talents should become subservient to the ruin of his Country's Liberties, is indeed a subject of the deepest regret; for had he maintained his original course, to what heights of prosperity and happiness might we not have arrived, and advanced other Nations desirous and deserving of Rational Freedom? Yet I trust this is not the age or country in which the system of terror will be suffered long to prevail.

I remain, dear Sir,

with much esteem, your's,

THOMAS BIGGE.

**NUMBER IX.**

*Containing the EDITOR'S Correspondence with  
the Whig Club, in the year 1796.*

**LETTER I.**

*From the Honourable THOMAS ERSKINE to  
the Rev. C. WYVILL.*

COMMITTEE-ROOM, SHAKESPEAR TAVERN,  
COVENT GARDEN,  
Jan. 23d, 1796.

Sir,

**Y**OU are earnestly requested to take into your consideration the form of Association entered into by the Whig Club, and recommended by them to their fellow subjects for signature. It is proposed to sign the Association on slips of parchment, similar to that which is sent to you, by signing only one name in a line, and adding to the name (in the same line) the place of abode, writing the words of the Association at the head of the slip. When as many have signed in your neighbourhood as you think are likely to sign, you will have the goodness to transmit the parchments so signed by a safe conveyance, addressed to the Secretaries of the Whig Club, at the Shakespear Tavern, Covent Garden, London. To guard against accidents, we recommend

commend it to you to copy into a book, to be retained by you, the names signed, adding their places of abode; and to enable us to judge whether what you send is received, be so good to intimate by a post letter what parchments you do send, and by what conveyance.

If this letter, together with the general declaration and resolutions published in the different Newspapers, are not sufficiently explanatory, we shall be happy to answer any question which you may think proper to put to us.

We have to apologize for this freedom, which by the direction of the Whig Club we are induced to take, in consequence of the zeal manifested by you and your friends in York and its neighbourhood, in opposition to the Bills \*; and if we were to suggest, we should propose that the same Committee which promoted the petition against the Bills, should promote the Association for their repeal, in case there should have been a petition from  
X 2  
your

\* On the 18th of December, 1795, the two innovating Bills received the Royal Assent. On the 19th of December, 1795, an extraordinary Meeting of the Whig Club of England was held at the instance of the Honourable Thomas Erskine, who from the Chair recommended an Association to effect the repeal of those obnoxious laws. And on the motion of Mr. Fox, supported by the patriotic Duke of Bedford, whose loss a whole Nation has so justly deplored at a subsequent period, it was resolved to associate accordingly, and a Committee was appointed to prepare a plan for an Association, in which the People of every part of the Country should be invited to join. And at a Meeting of the General Committee of the Whig Club on the 23d of January, 1796, it was resolved, that a Declaration then offered to the Committee should be adopted and published as the Declaration of the Whig Club, to which was annexed, by a subsequent resolution, the Form of their Association. For this Declaration and the annexed Form of Association, see the Preliminary Papers.

your neighbourhood. We leave it, however, to your judgment and discretion to constitute your Committee, and to promote the Association in such manner as shall seem to you to be most conducive to the end.

The mode in which we have proceeded here, is to sign individually, or in small bodies; and in case it is necessary to collect any large number for public discussion, we have done so by the signatures of seven Householders published in the terms of the Act, known by the name of Mr. Pitt's Act.

I am, Sir,

Your humble servant,

T. ERSKINE,  
Chairman.

## LETTER II.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to the Secretary of  
the Whig Club.*

BURTON-HALL, near BEDALE,  
YORKSHIRE, Feb. 8th, 1796.

Sir,

**T**HIS day I have received several duplicates on parchment of the Form of Association proposed for signature by the Whig Club, with Mr. Erskine's printed letter inclosed. The packet, I observe, was delayed some time, having been misdirected to me at York.

I have signed the Association; but I fear it cannot be tendered at present to the Freeholders of this neighbourhood, without disadvantage

vantage to the Cause. At York, Sheffield, and Huddersfield, I believe, a large majority of Inhabitants are inclined to enter into this Association; but in other parts of the County they are less favourably disposed; in some places where the obnoxious Acts are disapproved, there is not zeal sufficient to associate for their repeal. In other Districts, and those the most populous parts of the County, a great majority are violent in support of these Acts, and every other measure of Administration. I think an attempt to procure the adoption of the Association by a General Meeting of this County, or by District Meetings in the different Ridings, would be unsuccessful at this moment, except, as I have already said, at York, Sheffield, and Huddersfield. But, before the end of the current year, a considerable change in the sentiments of this County seems likely to happen, from various circumstances which are unforeseen, combined with others which are obvious and visible to every eye. I think it will be prudent to wait till this change has actually taken place, because a premature attempt to associate would only tend to retard, if not absolutely to prevent the adoption of that measure by the County at large, by the Ridings, or other inferior Districts.

But if your Committee should be inclined to think otherwise, if they see any urgent reasons for pushing the Association in Yorkshire before it seems likely to be agreed to by the County, or by any considerable parts of it, except those already mentioned, I should

be much obliged if they would have the goodness to communicate them, and I will then consult the principal Friends of the Association what it may be advisable to do here, on considering the information which may be given by the Committee.

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

C. WYVILL.

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### LETTER III.

*From R. W. CLARKSON, Esq; Assistant Secretary to the Whig Club, to the Rev. C. WYVILL.*

COMMITTEE-ROOM, *Shakspear Tavern,*  
*February 15th, 1796.*

Rev. Sir,

**I** HAVE the pleasure to acknowledge the receipt of your letter respecting the Association. The Committee direct me to say, that it is their intention to be guided by you in this business; and if you think that proposing the Association now would be unsuccessful, they wish it to be delayed for the present. At the same time, they hope you will have the goodness privately to obtain as many signatures as you can. \*

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

R. W. CLARKSON,

Assistant Secretary.

P. S. Please to direct your letters in future to Mr. E. Hall, 124, Long-Acre, London.

\* Soon after the date of this letter, it too plainly appeared that this generous effort to restore the principles of the Constitution would

would be unavailing for the present; the Ministers had obtained a complete victory in Parliament over the Defenders of the ancient Rights of the Nation, and the Body of the People were too much depressed and dismayed by their defeat, and by the almost absolute power, consequently vested in the hands of Government, to support by their efficacious concurrence the legal exertions of their Leaders. It is impossible to foresee how long this dejection of the public mind may continue; how long the Nation may acquiesce in the innovation effected by one of these laws still subsisting, which materially restricts the Liberty of Writing and Speaking, and allows the precedent which the other still more pernicious, though expired law has established, of an infringement by Parliament of the fundamental Charter of our Rights. It is disgraceful to the character of the People, that their dejection and acquiescence have already lasted eight years, though their patriotic Friends in Parliament under these discouraging circumstances have persevered with unconquerable fortitude in prosecuting the grand object of their Association.

But it is neither difficult to comprehend, nor presumptuous to assert, that the loss of Public Liberty, and the ruin of our limited Constitution must be the consequence of a long-continued submission to these innovations. The repeal of the Treason Act, and a Legislative condemnation of the expired Act, are objects of patriotic pursuit, which must be secured, or every other Right which is still left untouched will be held at the pleasure of Government. Though by a long series of frauds, for some ages, the House of Commons had been reduced nearly to the inefficiency of a Mock-Representation, yet the People still retained some influence in that House, and enjoyed a proportional degree of Freedom, while they retained the Rights which were invaded by the Acts in question. But under the new system it cannot be thus; for the experience of all past ages proves, that when the People have been wholly stripped of their political power, and reduced to hold their advantages, as Members of Society, at the discretion of their Rulers, the loss of those advantages has quickly followed the loss of their political privileges. In Parliament the great Majority of Nominal Representatives is at the disposal of the Crown. Let the invasion of the Bill of Rights and of the freedom of speaking and writing be confirmed by the silent submission of the Nation, either as Precedent or Law, and the voice of the People will be heard no more, either within the doors of Parliament, or without; and then the fatal alternative soon will be unavoidable, which every prudent Patriot now deprecates, and labours to avert, when having lost each regular and remedial power, the British Nation must submit to the assumption of absolute Dominion by the Crown, and, like the People of Rome, crouch in despair, beneath the rod of despotic authority, or attempt by forcible means to vindicate and restore its Rights. But it may be hoped that the multitude of deluded, but not ill-intending individuals, may open their eyes (before it be too late) to the consequences of their excessive fears, their implicit credulity, and blind reliance on the Minister, and may assist in the restoration of our ancient Right

Right by those peaceful and rational means which by their co-operation could not fail to succeed. They have wounded the Constitution dangerously, but not incurably. They have injured their Fellow-Citizens deeply, but not unpardonably; they did it unadvisedly under the influence of delusion. But when the delusion is past, when reparation is in their power, if they should still persevere in supporting these pernicious measures, they would incur the guilt of deliberate injustice; their last offence would be worse than the first; and candour itself would condemn them with severity.

## NUMBER

**NUMBER X.**

**LETTER I.**

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to WILLIAM  
SMITH, Esq; M. P. \**

BURTON-HALL, April 27th, 1796.

My Dear Sir,

I HAVE been some time preparing for publication my Correspondence with Mr. Pitt, the first part of which is now printed, and I hope my Bookseller will have sent you a copy very soon after you have received this letter. The second part, containing the Heads of Mr. Pitt's Bill of Reform, and a few Papers connected with it, will not be suppressed entirely; but as Mr. Pitt is understood to deny my right to hold it as in trust for the Public, and in the present circumstances to publish it, I thought it necessary to postpone the production of that Paper, and to state to the Public my reasons for thinking I have the right

\* The following letters form but a small part of the Editor's Correspondence on the subject discussed in them; but each of his honoured friends, Mr. Smith and Mr. Strickland, has taken so comprehensive a view of that subject, and given so accurate a decision of the points in question, that it appeared unnecessary to publish more, especially as those points, however personally interesting to the Editor and to Mr. Pitt, are comparatively unimportant to the Public.

which

which Mr. Pitt denies. I wish to do my duty to the Public, but not in a way which the Public would disapprove. I therefore shall be extremely obliged if you will have the goodness to let me know how the matter appears to you, on perusing the case, and also what you understand to be the opinion of other men of judgment and integrity, with whom you may chance to converse upon the subject. From your opinion, and that of a few other Gentlemen whom I mean to consult, and on whose judgment and friendly good will to me I entirely rely, my conduct will be determined either to publish the Paper soon, if I have your and their concurrent opinion for it; or, if the reverse, then to keep it back during the life of Mr. Pitt, taking the best care I can to secure the future publication of it after his death. My only wish is to do my duty to the Public; and in this way, I trust, I shall be able to do it in a manner that will be satisfactory to my own feelings. I therefore shall be extremely obliged to you for the favour of your opinion, which will have great weight with,

Dear Sir,

Your most faithful

humble servant,

C. WYVILL.

LETTER

## LETTER II.

*From WILLIAM SMITH, Esq; to the Rev,  
C. WYVILL.*

PARK STREET, WESTMINSTER, |

20th June, 1796.

My Dear Sir,

SINCE I last had the pleasure of writing to you, I have carefully perused the Pamphlet which you were so obliging as to send me, and will now, though with great diffidence, give that opinion which you have done me the honour to request.

The case appears to me not without its difficulties; and with respect to yourself, the most considerable lies, perhaps, in this point, that the very circumstance of Pitt's apostasy from the Cause of Parliamentary Reform, on which you ground, (and in my opinion justly, the propriety of your intended Publication) will be denied by his Friends, even by those *Reformers* who yet continue attached to him, while they will maintain that your persuasion of his insincerity not only warps your judgment as to the interpretation of some points of his conduct, but also excites a resentment and a desire of exposing him, to which, and not to your zeal for the Public, they will attribute the disclosure of the Papers in question. They will also, I apprehend, assert that till Mr. P. becomes so unequivocally hostile to Reformation, as that his conduct on that head shall be given up as indefensible by those who agree with him on general politics, he still retains

retains his right to exact secrecy as to his former intentions; and possibly, tho' I know not with what degree of colour, they *may* deny your right as *Chairman only* of the Yorkshire Committee, to give to the Public at large, uncalled for, what perhaps might have been meant for the consideration of that Body, previously to its being made generally known. On this last head, I think *little*, perhaps *no* stress can be laid; but I was not willing to omit any argument which seemed to me not unlikely to be used. On the other hand, your reasoning *against* the validity of Pitt's claim to secrecy at *this* time, appears to *me* to derive very great additional weight from his refusal or neglect to answer the letter you have addressed to him on that subject, and to be, perhaps, conclusive. But I cannot pretend to rank myself among the unprejudiced; indeed, in the present state of politics in this Country, and of opinion as to Mr. Pitt, I believe the number of those who have any right so to do, is very small indeed. And I am fully persuaded that whoever determines to take a decisive step in public matters contrary to the wishes, or hostile to the interests or character of the Minister, must satisfy himself with an *internal* acquittal, and be contented to suffer that degree of censure which the partizans of that Gentleman, hitherto, undoubtedly, the Majority, will not fail to cast upon him; counterbalancing it of course as far as may be with the approbation which the opposite party will throw into the opposite scale. The really Impartial, I fear, would be

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little more than "the small dust of the balance." That you, my dear Sir, have both the internal testimony, and the fortitude, when you think yourself right, on due deliberation "to scorn the Rabble's idle prate," I have no doubt at all. And therefore a question as material as any on the present occasion, appears to me to be the amount of the advantage to be at this moment expected from the measure you have in view. Here I have more doubts: the extreme torpor of the People, which not even an expenditure equally unexampled as to inutility and profusion has hitherto been able to overcome, makes me despair of any good effects from the best directed efforts on any other subject whatever. Were it not for the consolatory "Nil desperandum," I should almost think "Desperandum esset de Republica." But I do firmly believe that what has been said of the Russian with respect to his back, may be applied to the Englishman with respect to his *pocket*. It must be flayed before he can feel; and I profess, in our present situation, I hardly know which most to dread, the sufferings which this War is yet likely to bring upon us, or the termination of it, before the Nation shall be completely awakened to a sense of its real condition. Were I not afraid of something like fool-hardy presumption in the defiance of a foe who seems but too much to resemble Heaven's Messenger of Vengeance, I am clear that I should think the latter the worst branch of the alternative. I beg your pardon for this long intrusion on your patience; attribute

bute it to any thing but disrespect; and believe me,

Dear Sir,

Very faithfully your's,

WM. SMITH.

P. S. I am much obliged by your kind wishes on the subject of my re-election, which has fortunately been attended with little trouble to me, and with as many circumstances of honour as are usually to be met with in the present impure state of even the most popular Borough Elections.

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### LETTER III.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to WILLIAM SMITH, Esq; M. P.*

HARTLEPOOL, June 30th, 1796.

My Dear Sir,

**I** THANK you most sincerely for your kind letter of the 20th of this month. I requested your opinion, because I highly respected your judgment; and whether it had been in favour of the right contended for, or otherwise, it would in either case have had the greatest weight with me. I am therefore very happy to find you concur with me in thinking that, under the circumstances I have stated, the right to publish the Paper is clearly established. In this opinion almost all my friends and many others agree with whom I have no connection, and only have learned their opinion accidentally, or through the channel

channel of some friend. Two of my friends have expressed a difficulty to determine what they think so nice a question, and two more have given an opposite opinion. Of these last, Mr. H. Duncombe thinks it would be improper to use as an enemy what I had received as a friend; and Mr. Wilberforce, I understand, on similar grounds censures me with an asperity ill suited to the general candour of his mind. They seem to lay aside all consideration of what the Public might justly expect at my hands; and what censure might be passed upon me with much greater appearance of reason, for suppressing what I had received as a Friend of Reform, and an Agent of the Committee. But beside this, Mr. Wilberforce knows that thro' him I offered to return the Paper in question to Mr. Pitt, if he would say it was meant as a private communication. I still am willing to return it on that condition, with liberty to say to the Public, *that* was the reason why it was returned. But if Mr. Pitt will not, or cannot say this, how unjust is it in him or his friends to treat my character with severity, or to expect me to suppress a Paper, without enabling me to state the only reason by which the suppression could be justified. At present, therefore, it seems to me, that I am the person who may complain of injustice, and not Mr. Pitt. I feel, however, the force of those objections which you have considered with so much friendly attention; and I mean to obviate them by keeping the Paper in question till it be called for, either by the Yorkshire Gentlemen, or by some considerable Public

lic Meeting in some other part of the Kingdom. By deferring the production of this Paper till the Public has become eager for Reform, I shall shelter myself from censure, and at the same time I shall have the best chance of its making the impression I wish, viz. to incline the Public to prefer a moderate plan of Reform, which may probably be attained without a Civil War, to a more perfect and complete plan, which can only be attained by the overthrow of the present Constituted Authorities, after infinite calamities and infinite hazards to Liberty. That great calamities await us, that many dangers threaten our Liberties at present, is but too plain; and yet before any pacific opposition will be resolved on by the mass of the People in City and County Meetings, there must be a great increase of both danger and calamity, at least this is evidently the case in Yorkshire. How much greater before such Meetings will meditate force, must be the evils felt, and the evils apprehended. Before the People will become thus desperate, let us hope a due mixture of prudence and vigour may avert the fatal alternative of Despotism or Anarchy. Much I am sure in London will depend upon your exertions, which, I doubt not, will continue to be marked by a due proportion of spirit and moderation.

I am, with great regard and esteem,

Dear Sir,

Your obliged and faithful

C. WYVILL.

LETTER

## LETTER IV.

From WILLIAM STRICKLAND \*, Esq; to the  
Rev. C. WYVILL.

YORK, June 28th, 1796.

My Dear Sir,

I AM now to acknowledge the receipt of three letters from you; the two last of which I did not receive till my return to York on the day of Election, when any answer to them would have been useless, and have not written to you sooner on the subject of the first, because an immediate answer was not requisite, and when I turned to the subject, I wished to give it the consideration, and read your statement with the care which it required.

The question before me is whether you have a *right* to publish the heads of Mr. Pitt's Bill of Reform, and some other papers con-

\* The Editor returns his most cordial thanks to Mr. Strickland for his kindness in permitting him to publish this letter. Having been connected with Mr. Strickland in private friendship many years, and acted with him in political business of much importance, with mutual and invariable confidence, he feels it a duty to express his gratitude to his excellent Friend and Associate; and he adds, without fearing the imputation of partiality, that Mr. Strickland has deservedly attained universal esteem for his many virtues as a son, a husband and a father, for his fidelity as a friend, and his honourable conduct in every other relation of private life; and as a Public Man, he can only be classed with justice among those who are the most distinguished Patriots of our Country: at once judicious, firm, and disinterested, he is a steadfast Friend to Civil Liberty on the principles of the Constitution, and therefore an advocate for the correction of those abuses which impair its utility, and threaten its dissolution; not less a zealous Friend to Rational Religion, and therefore an adversary to every species of intolerance, to every infraction of the Rights of Conscience; for truth cannot want such means of support, the Gospel expressly disclaims them, and they are fit only to be employed in the service of error and superstition.

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nessed with it; and if you have a right, whether it would be prudent to publish them soon, or keep them back for a considerable and indefinite time, perhaps during the life of Mr. Pitt.

In answer to this, first as to the Right—*A Bill*, the principles of which have already been before Parliament, and there have been canvassed, which afterwards, by the Author's permission, has had those principles published to the world in a *Summary Explanation*, seems to be so completely the property of the Public, that they who have rightfully the possession of the essence and spirit of the Bill, surely cannot in right have the detail withheld from them, by which the principles were intended to be reduced to practice; nor can I see under what honest plea the framer of that Bill, who has granted to the world the substance of it, can have a right even to withhold the shadow. Should he, however, have that right, it does not appear to be your wish to deprive him of it, nor ought he to be so deprived. That right, however, I have been endeavouring to find, but can meet with no reservation that comes up to it, nor can I suppose that he feels himself to possess it, otherwise it probably would have been noticed in an answer to your letter of July 1787, at which period no interruption had taken place in your unreserved intercourse; but you so explicitly declare in your letter to Mr. Wilberforce of March 1793, and to Mr. Pitt in that of January 1796, and throughout the case lately published your willingness to restore

restore the paper, if Mr. Pitt could make any claim to it, or prove any original injunction of secrecy, that to my conviction his silence is an irrefragable proof that he can do neither; and if so, that the paper is a public one, and you have a right to make use of it in a way which you think most likely to benefit the Public.

I have given the subject every consideration in my power, placed it in every point of view that from the information I have before me I am able, and cannot hold any other opinion upon it. But why waste our time in this needless investigation? Let us, my dear Sir, speak out the truth: the Bill, professing to promote a Parliamentary Reform, was one step of the ladder by which its Author expected to raise himself to his ambitious elevation; having gained that, and supposing himself safely seated on the summit, he thought it likely to answer his purpose to kick down the ladder, and overwhelm along with it those who helped to steady it during his ascent. The publication of the Heads of his Bill at this time will expose afresh his insincerity and tergiversation to public censure, and however he may affect to despise this, when facts are so incontrovertably proved, human nature, from the compunctious feelings of which even mighty Ministers are not always and entirely exempt, must winch. For this reason many will wish the publication to be withheld, but with such we have nothing to do. It is the better reason for the Bill being published. As to the right to publish

after the death of Mr. Pitt, it cannot admit of a question; all papers of the nature of the one alluded to are the undoubted property of the Public; they constitute the foundation of history; without them scarce any authentic history could exist; and as certainly as history is useful, so certainly ought the Public to have the benefit of them.

On the policy of immediate publication, though it is the most important part of our present inquiry, I am the least capable of speaking, not knowing the particulars of the Heads of the Bill. You, and others who have seen them, must be the best judges how far they may be likely to prove useful, for I have my doubts of any thing at the present moment turning the attention of the People, or inducing them to exert an active interference for a Parliamentary Reform. Many are awed into silence, more corrupted, and the few that have remained true to their principles, uninfluenced by the seductions of the times, cannot, I fear, make any any efficient head against their opponents.

Were the immediate publication of these Heads likely to have the desired effect, they ought not to be withheld; but were they more likely to serve the cause when the Public mind should be turned to the subject, their present appearance would be imprudent. In either case I hold your *right* to produce them, but, for reasons before stated, I cannot say when that may be exerted with the best effect.

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The subject of your two other letters was of a temporary nature, and that time is passed; however, I am glad to find you were not present to make the motion you had once intended. From the temper and principles of the Meeting, I am satisfied it would have had no effect, and prudence forbids efforts to be made, when unattended with a reasonable prospect of success.\*

I was present on the day of Election, and can only say that it bare a very different aspect from what we have seen. We once vindicated ourselves from the undue influence of the Aristocracy of the County, and consequently stood high in our Representation and in Public opinion: we have now without a struggle submitted ourselves to the mandates of the Minister, and are sunk in merited proportion in our Representation and Reputation.

I am, my dear Sir,

Your's very sincerely and faithfully,

WM. STRICKLAND,

\* At the Previous, or Nomination Meeting of the County, it was the intention of the Editor to have attended, and to have proposed to the Freeholders that the several Candidates should be requested to declare their sentiments respecting the propriety of a Political Reformation, on the principles adopted by the County of York in 1780, and repeatedly approved at subsequent Meetings of the County. For this purpose endeavours were used by the Editor to secure a respectable co-operation; the letter here alluded to was written to Mr. Strickland, and similar letters were addressed to other friends; but finding no prospect of success, he gave up the design, and absented himself from the Meeting.

## LETTER V.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to WILLIAM  
STRICKLAND, Esq.*

HARTLEPOOL, July 3d, 1796.

My dear Sir,

**L**AST night I received your's of the 28th of June, and I hasten to return you my best thanks for your kind and friendly attention to my request, and for your very accurate examination of the question on which I wished to know your opinion. I do assure you I have not found my own sentiments so fully confirmed by any of the numerous communications I have received as by your clear and conclusive reasoning upon the subject. That Mr. Pitt and his adherents are displeased with my publication, I am aware; that some of them express their displeasure in terms of great asperity, I have been told, but my uneasiness at it has been almost daily lessened by the increasing weight of opinions in the opposite scale; and after your decisive letter, I shall feel great indifference to whatever harshness of censure may be applied to me by the persons alluded to. At present, the state of opinions stands thus: two of my friends, viz. Sir Cecil Wray and Mr. Peirse thought it too nice a question to give any decided answer; our worthy friend, Mr. H. Duncombe, thought it would be an impropriety to publish as an enemy what I had received (as he thinks) as a friend. His is the only adverse opinion I have received, and it is expressed with his usual mildness

mildness and candour ; but I have also understood that Mr. Wilberforce censures me with great severity, and, as I think, with equal injustice. Excepting these two opinions, every other which I have either received or heard of, concurs with your's and mine, respecting the Right contended for. With respect to the expediency of exercising that Right, I entirely agree with you in thinking that the decisive consideration here will be, what is the prospect of benefiting the Public by the publication intended? And to me it appears clear, as it does to you, that the Nation is not yet in a temper to pay due attention to such a paper ; and I certainly shall postpone publishing the Heads, till the Public is better disposed. I wish to keep that paper back till the spirit of Reform is once more roused, and the Gentlemen of Yorkshire may think it proper to call for its appearance. When they are disposed to make such a call, I hope the Country Gentlemen in other parts may be inclined the same way ; and then I trust my compliance with their Requisition may tend to fix the attention of the Public on a moderate plan of Reform, and thus prevent our running into extremes at that critical season which is certainly, and I believe speedily approaching. Once more, my dear Sir, accept my cordial thanks, and believe me, with the greatest esteem and regard,

Your's ever,

C. WYVILL.

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NUMBER

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NUMBER XI.

*Containing the EDITOR's Letters to several Yorkshire Gentlemen in the year 1797, respecting a Meeting of the County of York, proposed to be held in that year.*

LETTER I.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to WILLIAM STRICKLAND, Esq.*

BURTON-HALL, April 28th, 1797.

My Dear Sir,

**A** SEPARATE Peace between France and Austria we are informed is actually concluded, or is on the point of being so. This circumstance seems very much to strengthen the case of the Petitioners for Peace between this Country and France; and I have lately found from several letters from friends and strangers, that the disposition of this County is more favourable than it was for a General Meeting to petition the Throne or the House of Commons for Peace, and for a Redress of Grievances. Would you join on the present occasion in sending a Requisition to the Sheriff to call a Meeting of the Freeholders of the County of York to consider in the present dangerous crisis " what properly may be done, what

what legally can be done by them for the salvation of the Country."

If you approve the present time, and such a Requisition as is above sketched out, you will have the goodness to signify your concurrence by the earliest post, which will very much encourage me to proceed; but alone will not be absolutely decisive. This is my first application, jointly to you and General Hale; and unless I receive from both my old friends their approbation and concurrence, I shall not take any farther steps in this business.

Such a Requisition as I have sketched out, I believe would be agreeable to Mr. Yorke, Mr. Hutton, Mr. Fowler Hickes, Mr. Ellsley, and some other Gentlemen in this Country. It would be desirable not to meet till near the end of May; and if the Sheriff refuses to call the County together, notice of it in conformity with the late Act of Parliament restraining the Right to petition, should be forthwith given, I think, and made as public as possible.

I am ever, my dear Sir,

With great regard,

most faithfully your's,

C. WYVILL.

Some time before the date of this letter the Editor had founded some of his friends in his immediate neighbourhood on the subject of it, but found them generally averse from the attempt he meditated, from an opinion, which at that time was but too well founded, that in the Western, which is the most populous part of this County, no sufficient change of sentiment respecting the state of the Nation, or the conduct of Ministers, had taken place.

Towards the end of April, 1797, however, the situation of the Country had grown more critical; it became daily more and still more evident that the object of the War was unattainable, whether

## LETTER II.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to the Rev. EDWARD  
BALDWIN.*

BURTON-HALL, May 1<sup>st</sup>, 1797.

Sir,

ON receiving your favour of the 26th of April, I immediately consulted some friends,\* whose judgment I much respect, and whose sentiments on public affairs I know are nearly the same, as my own on the propriety of calling a County Meeting at this time,

whether that object were the restoration of the Bourbon Family, or the dismemberment of France; and even the Manufacturers of the West began to wish for Peace. At that time several respectable persons in and near Bradford, through the Rev. Edward Baldwin, a Gentleman personally a stranger to the Editor, though his learning and his abilities were not unknown to him, consulted him on the prudence of calling the Freeholders of Yorkshire together, to unite with other Counties in addressing his Majesty to dismiss his Ministers. In consequence of that application, though Mr. Baldwin himself expressed his apprehension that the Friends of Freedom would, probably, not succeed at a County Meeting at York at that time, yet the Editor considered it to be his duty to state to some of his old and most respected Associates the favourable change of sentiment, which he conceived to have taken place in Yorkshire, and the probability that the separate Peace then under negociation between France and Austria, could not fail, when concluded, to increase the unpopularity of the War and its promoters; and if the excellent friends alluded to, should concur in the measure, he ventured to suggest to them, he resolved once more to engage in the extensive and fatiguing task to recommend a County Meeting to the independent Gentlemen of Yorkshire.

\* William Strickland, Esq; and General Hale, from whom the Editor had requested an immediate answer, wishing *his* to the Bradford Gentlemen to be delayed as little as possible. Not having heard from either of his friends at the time he expected, he apprehended their opinion to be against the expedience of a Meeting, and therefore he wrote this discouraging answer to the application from Bradford. The silence of the worthy General, no doubt, proceeded

time. I am sorry to say they have not encouraged me to proceed; and when such men as I allude to either cannot attend, or are too apprehensive of a failure to advise a Meeting, and therefore by their silence discourage the proposition, I think it would be imprudent to proceed. I am very well satisfied with having done what, in the present situation of the Country, Public Duty seems to require; but I see no prospect that any good can be done by pressing a Meeting in Yorkshire in the present desponding state of the Friends of Peace and Reform; and therefore I mean to make no farther application to any of my old Associates, and I anxiously wish that those Gentlemen who have done me the honour to consult me upon the subject, through you, may be content to acquiesce a little longer in a state of inactivity, however zealously they wish for a favourable opportunity, as I also do, to call a County Meeting to accelerate a Peace with France. I do assure you, Sir, and them, it is matter of great consolation to me to know that you and they approve my public conduct, and are ready at a proper jun-

proceeded from one of the motives here conjectured; but after some time, in spite of the infirmities of age, his active mind was roused by the prospect of success, and the Editor had the satisfaction to be joined by the earliest of his political friends then living. Mr. Strickland, the Editor soon found, was in London, and the distance had unavoidably delayed his answer a few days. It was written with his usual judgment and patriotic zeal, and the Editor, perceiving his friend to be inclined to the measure proposed, tho' his concurrence was not yet given, and having also received respectable encouragement in his own neighbourhood, was induced to proceed with his correspondence. The Requisition in a short time after was signed; for which see the Preliminary Papers.

ture to give me your concurrence and support;

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient

humble servant,

C. WYVILL.

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### LETTER III.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to WILLIAM STRICKLAND, Esq.*

BURTON-HALL, May 5<sup>th</sup>, 1797.

My Dear Sir,

I Agree with you entirely on the impolicy of a premature attempt to oppose the continuance of the War, by Popular Meetings, before the People have felt sufficiently how much they are interested to join in the opposition. The ill effect of the Meeting in December, 1795, has been evident; instead of weakening, it undoubtedly strengthened Ministers; I foresaw this at the time, but the Meeting being called by others, I did not think it right to withhold my concurrence. At present I think the case stands nearly thus: The Manufacturers are greatly hurt by the War; the more moderate part of those among them, who formerly opposed measures adverse to the Minister, (I mean in December, 1795) are now in sentiments with us as to Peace; some of these would openly support us, and probably more would absent themselves, but with us success; this being so, the determined  
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Tories would be greatly weakened, and, on a balance being struck, I think our Friends in the class of Manufacturers would a good deal out-number them. With respect to the Country Gentlemen, I think they have felt less inconvenience from the War than the Manufacturing Classes have, and many of them want sagacity to foresee, that, in the issue of this most ruinous War, their interests will ultimately suffer greater and more lasting injury than even the Trade or Manufactures of the Country. A less proportion, therefore, of those Landed Gentlemen who were formerly adverse, may be expected to join; several, however, would join, and none would be zealous against us, I think, but the immediate Friends of Mr. Pitt, Lord Fitzwilliam, and the two County Members. But among the Yeomen and the Shopkeepers of this County, I am persuaded we should have a most decided majority; and their numbers, aided by the increased strength of the Friends of Peace among the Country Gentlemen and the Manufacturers, would probably give great and sufficient weight to the measures we might propose; sufficient, I mean, to make it evident that the unbiassed sense of the County is for Peace, and to make it useful that a Meeting of the County had been called; but sufficient to induce Ministers to abandon the ruinous contest, I do not hope it would be, especially as a General Election is at so great a distance. However, it would have a great effect if the business were conducted with due prudence, and supported with as much vigour

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as it ought to be, and as we have some reason to hope it would be. Our chief difficulty would be to form a good Committee at York *in your absence*; should your stay in London be short, that defect would be soon completely supplied. I think the sentiments of our late most worthy Representative are the same as ours; I did not apply to him at the same time that I wrote to you and our friend, General Hale, from motives of delicacy, thinking he might not wish to sign a Requisition, or at least not to be forward and active in promoting such a measure. I therefore proposed to apply only in case you and the General encouraged me to do so. Fortunately, I shall have an opportunity very soon to converse with him here at Burton. I expect to see him on Monday: and though the General from his infirm state of health declines engaging in the business, yet as you would approve the measure, if Mr. H. Duncombe would join, I certainly shall propose it to him, and let you know the result as soon as possible.

I forgot to mention, that I have assurances from several respectable Catholics, formerly inactive, that they will attend a County Meeting, and support our measures\*.

I am, allowed

\* The Catholics of England, like the men of every other religious persuasion, no doubt are lovers of liberty; no doubt they detest oppression, and therefore they cannot but love the Constitution which affords them protection. The interest of their Church, and the prospect of enjoying power and credit under a Catholic King, re-established here partly by their assistance, may have misled a considerable portion of that body from the Cause of Constitutional Freedom during the two preceding Reigns. In the present Reign that prospect has been closed; and the Catholics, if now restored completely

lowed to name Mr. Scroope, Mr. Meynell,  
Mr. T. Meynell, and I know of others.

I am, my dear Sir, with perfect cordiality,  
your's ever,  
C. WYVILL.

#### LETTER IV.

From the Rev. C. WYVILL to Sir THOMAS  
GASCOIGNE, Bart. and other Yorkshire  
Gentlemen.

BURTON-HALL, May 7th, 1797.

My Dear Sir,

**I** HAVE ventured to propose to some of our  
Friends a Requisition to the Sheriff to call  
a County Meeting. Nothing is yet settled,  
nor will be till to-morrow, when I expect

pletely to the rights of Citizens, would probably be distinguished  
as much as any other class of our countrymen by their patriotic  
zeal for Civil Liberty. At least, experience seems to confirm the  
supposition in no inconsiderable degree. Released from some of  
the iniquitous restraints of our persecuting statutes by the increased  
liberality of the present age, they yet remain subject to odious and  
degrading disabilities which ought to be reserved for guilt alone.

Deprived of the important Rights alluded to, but conscious of  
their innocence, they ventured to indulge the hope that at no very  
distant period complete justice would be done them; and feeling  
a generous interest in the welfare of the Public, they anticipated  
the period of their full restoration to the Rights of Citizens. For  
the first time, since the expulsion of the Stuarts, the Catholics in  
1792 took a part, at Public Meetings, in favour of Liberty, and  
joined their strength to aid the efforts of other Friends of the Peo-  
ple to effect a Political Reform. And in 1797, on the occasion  
of the overture made in Yorkshire to assemble the Friends of our  
endangered Rights to petition for redress, many distinguished  
Catholics concurred in the measure, and the Gentlemen here  
named, whose friendship the Editor had long enjoyed, were  
among the foremost to encourage him to proceed.

Mr.

Mr. H. Duncombe at Burton, and mean to propose the business to him. If he should approve and concur, the measure will be proceeded with immediately, and you will be informed of it without delay. We trust you are as fully convinced of the necessity of such a movement as we are, and will favour us with your concurrence and support, if finding Mr. H. Duncombe willing to embark with us, we should resolve to make such a Requisition.

I am, my dear Sir,

Most sincerely your faithful

humble servant,

C. WYVILL.

P. S. It hardly needs to be observed, that in this stage of the business secrecy will be proper.

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### LETTER V.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to WILLIAM STRICRLAND, Esq.*

BURTON-HALL, *Tuesday Evening,*  
May 9th, 1797.

My Dear Sir,

OUR worthy Friend, Mr. H. Duncombe, would willingly sign a Petition for the Removal of Ministers, but declines signing a Requisition, not being in perfect health and spirits to attend a County Meeting. He seems to think it will be prudent to wait a little longer; with which opinion I am very ready

ready to acquiesce, especially if it would meet your approbation, as I conclude it will. Yet we must be cautious not to incur the danger of being too late with our remonstrance to the Throne, and so suffering matters to take a ~~Revolutionary turn by waiting to obtain~~ a more decisive majority. It was with a view to anticipate this danger that I made the overture to you and General Hale. Believe me ever,

With the greatest esteem,

Dear Sir, cordially your's,

C. WYVILL.

*Wednesday Morning*

P. S. I understood Mr. Duncombe to be friendly to Peace and moderate Reform, and desirous of the removal of Ministers, as the means to obtain these objects. Still, however, he must be understood, and it is highly reasonable he should, as not pledging himself to support *any* Petition for Peace, however improperly worded, or however dangerous in its tendency. For myself also I wish to reserve the same latitude of judgment respecting the tendency and mode of wording any Petition or any other measure that might be brought forward. I have only to add that I have had few letters from friends, having written few, till I heard from you. But what I have received have in general been encouraging. I think it would be right to extend our communications, and concert all preparatory measures as much as possible, that we may be ready to advance immediately on the return

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of

of Mr. Hammond, re infectâ. That would remove the only remaining difficulty which it would be possible for the friends of Mr. Pitt to object.

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## LETTER VI.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to R. S. MILNES,  
Esq; and other Gentlemen.*

BURTON-HALL, May 10th, 1797.

My Dear Sir,

**M**R. H. Duncombe has just left Burton. On conversing with him last night by ourselves, I found him willing to sign a Petition for Peace and moderate Reform, and for the removal of Ministers, as the means to attain those objects; but he declined to sign a Requisition for a County Meeting, because he finds himself too infirm to attend. Yet I still hope a Meeting will soon take place. If Mr. Hammond should return re infectâ, the last pin would be taken down, on which the friends of Ministers might hang a doubt. With a view to that circumstance our communications will be extended, and every preparation will be made to avail ourselves of the decisive change of sentiment which it must unavoidably produce. Upon the whole, this overture has already proved that our situation in Yorkshire

\* Encouraged by the concurrence of Mr. H. Duncombe to the extent here stated, the Editor proceeded with all the rapidity in his power to communicate to the Great Body of Yorkshire Gentlemen the Form of the proposed Requisition, for which see the Preliminary Papers.

is much better than it was in 1795, and that we probably shall be able to come forward with effect in a little time. I am particularly happy at having our late worthy Representative engaged with us, as far as I have stated.

Excuse haste, and believe me,

Dear Sir,

Cordially your's,

C. WYVILL.

# LETTER VII.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to the Duke of NORFOLK.*

BURTON-HALL, near BEDALE,  
May 11th, 1797.

My Lord Duke,

I Have the honour to communicate, for your Grace's consideration, a Requisition to the Sheriff to call a County Meeting, which I have ventured to propose, and to which I have already obtained as many signatures as in so very short a time I could expect. It is not thought advisable by those I have consulted that the Requisition should go to the Sheriff without a list of at least 60 names subscribed, and the expectation of more coming in, during the course of advertising it. It is proposed to call *the Freeholders*, and not, as has been practised in some other Counties, *the Inhabitants*, that we may avoid disgusting the Gentry, who are not yet sufficiently recovered from their alarm.

It is intended that the prayer of the Petition should be "to dismiss Ministers;" but the purpose of the Meeting is stated in the Requisition *in general terms*, that we may have liberty to adapt the premises of the Petition, and also the Resolutions, to what we may discover to be the general sense of the Freeholders, and avail ourselves, as far as we can, of the favourable disposition of the Meeting.

If these ideas should be fortunate enough to meet your Grace's approbation, I understand from Mr. John Milnes, that you are likely to meet the co-operation of many respectable persons in and near Wakefield, where I have learned from him you are expected to be about this time. In that case I judge that a County Meeting, supported by your Grace and the Gentlemen alluded to, would prove that the sense of a Majority of the Freeholders, fairly taken, is for Peace and a Dismission of Ministers.

It is highly probable that in six months a more decisive majority would be for a change of Men and Measures; but the tendency to a Revolution seems to be so rapidly increasing, that I acknowledge my earnest wish that we may meet at present, while it still seems possible that the interposition of the County of York may prevent the incalculable evils to which a Revolution would inevitably give birth. I have the honour to be,

My Lord Duke,

Your Grace's most obedient

and humble servant,

C. WYVILL.

P. S. To

(( 337 ))

P. S. To prevent unnecessary delays, I would beg leave to suggest, that it is expedient, that they who subscribe the Requisition should also give authority for adding their names to an advertisement, in conformity with the late Bill, in case the Sheriff should give a negative to the Requisition\*.

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### LETTER VIII.

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*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to ROBERT  
SINCLAIR, Esq.*

*BERTON-HALL, May 11th, 1797.*

Dear Sir,

I HAVE ventured to propose the Requisition on the other half sheet; and if it meet your approbation, and that of the other Friends of Peace and Reform in York, I hope you will give it the most effectual support. It is not intended to send it to the Sheriff till sixty names of competent weight have been subscribed. This my Friends think essential; and I cannot but think so too.

The greatest service which can be done in York will be the formation of a Committee as soon as possible, and *that* as large and weighty as you can, in order that you may have daily Meetings to receive and answer letters, to consider of hand-bills and para-

\* To this letter no answer was received from the Duke of Norfolk; and it was soon understood by the Editor, that his Grace's silence proceeded from his despair that the projected effort would be successful.

graphs in the Newspapers, and to take every other proper measure which may be calculated to inform and animate the People. I shall be happy to hear you and your Friends in York approve the motion I have ventured to make\*, and am, with great regard,

Dear Sir,

Very sincerely your's,

C. WYVILL.

### LETTER IX.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to MARMADUKE  
CONSTABLE, Esq.*

BURTON-HALL, May 13<sup>th</sup>, 1797.

Sir,

**T**HE tendency to a Revolution in this Country seems rapidly to increase, and if no attempt be made by the independent part of the community to stop Ministers in their hazardous career, in a short time it may be impossible to prevent the terrible evils which such a crisis will inevitably produce. With this view I have thought it my duty to propose the Requisition on the other half sheet to many Gentlemen in this part of Yorkshire, from several of whom I have received answers of approbation; from more I have not yet heard. However I feel sufficient encouragement, from what I am now able to collect, to proceed with the business, and to offer the Requisition to your consideration.

\* A similar letter was sent to other Gentlemen in and near York.

Should

Should you think the attempt likely to be useful to the Public, I am certain it will meet with your support, which will give me the greatest satisfaction and encouragement; and I flatter myself, if the business should appear to you in a different light, I shall at least have the consolation to know that Mr. Constable is fully satisfied that my conduct on the present occasion is directed by the view above stated.

I am, Sir,

With great esteem,

Your most faithful humble servant,

C. WYVILL.

## LETTER X.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to R. S. MILNES,  
Esq.*

BURTON-HALL, May 19th, 1797.

My Dear Sir,

**T**HE only way in which I can satisfy myself, *as properly in any degree* expressing my grateful sense of the confidence you repose in me, is not at present to put your name down as a subscriber.

When I have got a farther insight into what probably may be the disposition of the Gentlemen, and see a better chance than I now do, of our being able to come forward in a respectable manner, such as you would be content with, then I shall be happy to avail myself of your kind indulgence. However I must say, that in this part of the Country I

have met with greater success than I expected; and even now I am much inclined to think a County Meeting should and will take place. My plan is this; in a fortnight or less I hope to have a list of sixty respectable names. That indispensable requisite being obtained, I mean to advertise a previous Meeting at Ringrose's of the Subscribers, and of all Gentlemen who wish a change of men and measures, in order to lay before them material papers, consider our strength, and form some concerted plan for acting with vigour and unanimity. If at that Meeting it should be thought advisable, the Requisition may be sent from thence to the Sheriff; or if, after making these exertions, our strength should be thought not clearly superior to that opposed to us, we may find various ways of making a handsome retreat, and there will be a great advantage gained in having obtained the declared support of such worthy Country Gentlemen as Mr. Dodsworth, Colonel Coore, &c. The Petition, if a Meeting takes place, must be left till near the Day of Meeting, to be drawn up according to the then existing circumstances. If Hammond should be likely to make Peace, it will narrow the premises on which our Prayer for the dismissal of Ministers must be grounded. Enough, however, will certainly remain.

I am your's, &c.

C. WYVILL.

LETTER

## LETTER XL

From the Rev. C. WYVILL to EDWARD  
CONSTABLE, Esq.

BURTON-HALL, May 20th, 1797.

Dear Sir,

I have ventured once more to propose to the County to meet with a view to petition the Throne for a Redress of Grievances in England and Ireland, and a speedy Peace; and as the means to insure the attainment of those objects, to pray for a Dismissal of Ministers. In this part of Yorkshire, the Country Gentlemen, I hope, will pretty generally concur. In the West, I expect the wealthy Manufacturers, who hold contracts under Government, will be vehement on the other side. If you, Sir, should, fortunately for the Country, see public affairs in the same light as we do in the North, and agree with us that it is high time to endeavour to stop Ministers in their hazardous career, I own I shall begin to hope we may succeed in the well-meant attempt to save the Country from those dangerous extremities to which we are so rapidly hastening.

I have the honour to be,

My dear Sir, your obedient servant,

With great esteem,

Your most faithful servant,

C. WYVILL.

LETTER

of

## LETTER XII.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to HENRY PEIRSE,*  
Esq.

BURTON-HALL, May 23<sup>d</sup>, 1797.

My Dear Sir,

**I** PERSEVERE in my pursuit; but I mean neither to be rash nor obstinate; far less am I capable of slighting the counsel of such Friends as yourself and Mr. Strickland. But I am encouraged to push the business a little farther by two considerations; the first, that I have received great support in the North-Riding; the other, that the Country Gentlemen in the West, I understand, are much with us, although in the Towns opinions remain in nearly the same state as at the beginning of the War. I therefore press the Requisition as fast through the County as I can, meaning, in about ten days time, to request a previous Meeting of the Requisitioners and of those who are friendly to a change of men and measures, but who have not signed the Requisition. By this previous Meeting, I hope, the comparative state of our strength, and that likely to be opposed to us, will be well weighed; the state of the Negotiation, too, may then be known: if Mr. Hammond by that time should be returned without a Peace, our game is sure; if he should still be negotiating, the County Meeting may be delayed, by appointing another Meeting of the Requisitioners at a proper distance of time, so as  
to

to have that point of *no peace at present* ascertained. And if, after all, Hammond should return with the Preliminaries of a Peace signed, we may effect a retreat, I conceive, without any loss of character or credit. So that you see, my good Friend, I mean to canvass the County only, but not to take upon myself the responsibility of either sending the Requisition to the Sheriff, or suppressing it. And now let me add another line or two on the state of my list. It now contains about 40 names; of which about 24 or 25 are the names of persons who were either *neutral* or *hostile* in 1795. I expect answers to 60 or 70 letters very soon, and perhaps I am not too sanguine in supposing they may add to my list 25 names, or more, besides the very considerable force in reserve, Mr. Fawkes and his Friends, the Lords and their Friends, &c. For, wishing it be the act of the Country, I have yet applied to no Peer except the Duke of Norfolk. But of the progress of my canvass you shall be apprised again very soon.— In the mean-time believe me, with affectionate regard and esteem,

Dear Sir,

Your's ever,

C. WYVILL.

LETTER

## LETTER XIII.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to WILLIAM  
STRICKLAND, Esq.*

BURTON-HALL, May 1<sup>st</sup>, 1797.

My dear Sir,

**T**HIS morning I received your kind letter of the 20<sup>th</sup>. I am just going to Richmond, to get the increased List printed; but I must stop to write a very few lines.

In the first place, I thank you most cordially for the trust you place in me, of which you may be well assured I shall make none but the most cautious use. I mean not to print your name, or Sir G. Cayley's, at present, or those of two other Friends who have honoured me with a similar confidence. Mine in your judgment and integrity is as great as can be, I think, in any man: I feel happy in your's, and shall remember it with gratitude as long as I live.

In the next place, I would not think of offering the Requisition to the Sheriff till the point be ascertained that we are not to have *a Peace at present*. In that case, notwithstanding the rage of the Contractors and other Clothiers and Merchants in the West-Riding, which I presume would be manifested by them to as great an excess as in 1795, I think we should be supported well by the Landed Interest in general, and probably should be successful. In the North-Riding, the disgust  
at

at the continuance of the War is very strong indeed. Believe me,

My dear Sir,

With cordial esteem and regard,

Your's ever,

C. WYVILL.

LETTER XIV.

From the Rev. C. WYVILL to WALTER  
FAWKES, Esq.

BURTON-HALL, May 27<sup>th</sup>, 1797.

Sir,  
WHEN I wrote to you a few posts ago, our affairs were in a less prosperous train than I had expected, and I could not help expressing to you some doubt of our success at a County Meeting, unless the Landed Gentlemen would come forward with greater spirit. I have now the pleasure to inform you that I have received very considerable support indeed within these few days. I expect my increased list back from the Printer by express to-day, to save the post, if possible; but, lest it should not arrive in time, I will just mention that the present number is 55, many of them of the greatest respectability, and about 30 are fresh names, that is, names of Gentlemen who were friendly to Mr. Pitt and his measures till lately. I am so far from desponding, or having any thought of abandoning the idea of a County Meeting, as I understand our Adversaries have reported, that I am  
clearly

clearly of opinion that, in the event of Mr. Hammond's return without the Preliminaries of a Peace, we ought to meet with as little delay as possible, consistent with the giving of due notice. And that there is every reason to believe the Meeting of the County in that case would be decidedly favourable to our measures. If Hammond's mission should have a different issue than that first supposed, a previous private Meeting would still be necessary to determine the question, whether to suppress or tender the Requisition to the Sheriff. As I have been intrusted by so many Gentlemen of the highest respectability in a business of very great public importance, I hold myself absolutely responsible to them; and in either event of Mr. Hammond's negotiation a previous Meeting I conceive should be called, and certainly will be called as soon as the proper time for it seems to be come, in order that they may then consider what is expedient after having inspected material Papers, and considered the disposition of the County, and the probability of doing good by their interposition. In the mean time, Sir, if you approve these ideas, it is my earnest request that you will promote the signature of the Requisition to the utmost of your power. A large addition in a few days will probably be made, and the situation of the Public seems to call for such a measure more distinctly than ever.

I am, Sir, with great respect,

your most faithful servant,

C. WYVILL.

LETTER

## LETTER XV.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to the Duke of  
NORTHUMBERLAND.\**

BURTON-HALL, near BEDALE,

May 29th, 1797.

My Lord Duke,

I HAVE the honour to transmit for your Grace's consideration the inclosed Requisition to the High Sheriff of this County to call a Meeting of the Freeholders, in order to petition the Throne for a Change of Men and Measures. If the Requisition is fortunate enough to meet your Grace's approbation, the Gentlemen who have engaged in this business flatter themselves they shall be favoured with your signature\*and active support; and if your Grace's health would permit, they would even indulge a hope of your personal attendance on the day of meeting, which would be received with most sincere respect and gratitude by them, and by, my Lord,

Your Grace's most obedient

Humble servant,

C. WYVILL.†

\* A letter nearly similar was sent about this time to Earl Thanet, Lord George Cavendish, and other distinguished persons connected with Yorkshire. The Duke of Northumberland and Earl Thanet concurred in the measure, and in the most handsome manner transmitted their signature to the Requisition.

† In this part of his Correspondence, the Editor has found himself obliged to depart from his custom hitherto, and to publish his share of the series unaccompanied by the answers which he had the honour to receive, either from the Noblemen to whom this letter was addressed, or from the numerous Body of Yorkshire Gentlemen to whom he had applied on this occasion. The truth is, he did request the consent of his two Friends,

Friends, whose letters on the proposed Requisition he wished to publish. The silence of one friend, and the apprehension strongly (and as the Editor conceives not without reason) expressed by the other, soon convinced him that the Correspondence in question was too recent, and the animosity excited by the measure proposed was still too formidable to admit the publication of these letters; and the wish to do it was immediately suppressed. Soon after the date of this letter, viz. on the 6th of June, 1797, a numerous and respectable Meeting of Gentlemen, friendly to the intended County Meeting, was held at York; and a subsequent meeting, by adjournment, was held on the 3d of August 1797. The Resolutions agreed to at each of these Public Meetings, and the Requisition which was submitted to the consideration of the Gentlemen assembled, will be found near the end of the Preliminary Papers in this Volume.

## NUMBER XII.

*Containing the EDITOR'S Correspondence with  
J. R. FENWICK, Esq; and THOMAS BIGGE,  
Esq; respecting the proposed Meeting of the  
County of York, in 1797.*

## LETTER I.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to J. R. FENWICK,  
Esq.*

BURTON-HALL, May 4<sup>th</sup>. 1797.

My Dear Sir,

THE post has just brought me Mr. Strickland's answer *from London*; the business remains undecided, but as he hesitates only till it is clearly ascertained whether we shall have an adequate support, I think a County Meeting likely to take place. I expect our late worthy Representative, Mr. Duncombe, at Burton on Monday next, and as I find he considers our situation in as awful a light almost as we do, and expresses himself with indignation at Mr. Pitt, I think he will not be averse to the measure proposed. If he agrees to sign a Requisition, I shall require no more. And as in that case I shall be pretty much engaged next week, I will not close my letter here, but add a few lines on the subject of those measures, which, if a Meeting should be effected, it would be expedient, and was my in-

A a

tention

tion to propose. I entirely agree with you in thinking that a mere Request to Majesty to change Ministers with a view to a speedy Peace, however acceptable to some of the Minority, would on our part be very impolitic. Your reasoning on the subject is strong and decisive, and your conduct on the application by A. B. is worthy of your enlightened patriotism. The Sketch of a Requisition which I sent to my two Yorkshire Friends was drawn up in the same spirit in very general terms: the Freeholders were to be invited "to consider, in the present perilous circumstances, what properly might, what legally could be done by them for the salvation of the Country." In the Petition which I would have offered, and which I still hope to offer to them, I mean to include Peace, the repeal of the two Bills, and the Conciliation of Ireland, intending to propose in separate Resolutions the Reform of Parliament, &c. by which means the grand business would be brought forward to view, and the opinion of the Meeting taken upon it, without hazarding the other propositions in the Petition, on all of which the Minority would gladly concur with us. This is my plan for the proposed Meeting; and it will not be easy for any of the mere adherents of Opposition to induce me to depart from it, after having found how nearly similar views have led you to adopt a similar system of conduct. Should Mr. D. agree to the Requisition, I will inform you of it without delay. With our best wishes to you and Mrs. Fenwick, I am,

Dear Sir, most cordially your's,

C. WYVILL.

P. S. If the Resolutions for Reform should be warmly approved by the Meeting, it would be easy to follow them up by instructions to the County Members, by authorizing the Sheriff, or seven Persons in compliance with the late Restrictions, to call a Meeting in October to petition Parliament for a Reform in the Representation, or by a Petition brought forward immediately after the Resolutions, as the degree of zeal manifested by the Meeting might seem to render most advisable. In this manner I think the Cause of Reform may be served with as much effect as in the present circumstances we have any reason to expect.\*

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## LETTER II.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to THO. BIGGE, Esq.*

BURTON-HALL, May 8th, 1797.

My Dear Sir,

I WRITE two lines, in great haste, to you and to our excellent friend, Dr. Fenwick, who you tell me will be with you soon after you will receive this short note.

I find here timidity and hesitation, mixed with abhorrence of the present measures. By delay, our strength and our courage would undoubtedly be increased; in Yorkshire, I

\* It seemed expedient to subjoin this short series of letters respecting the Requisition Meetings in Yorkshire, in 1797, to the longer series on the same subject immediately preceding. These, in some respects, are more explanatory of the view with which those Meetings were called, than any of the letters in the former Number.

mean; but in the same, or perhaps a much greater degree, the tendency to a Revolution would be increased, and the increased calamities of the War (while we were waiting with a view to obtain the greatest degree of strength possible) might plunge the Country in irretrievable ruin. We shall not meet at all without the certainty of the accession of several respectable friends, particularly of our late worthy Representative, Mr. H. Duncombe. But if he should give his assent to-day, the business will undoubtedly go on. Parliamentary Reform cannot be made the most prominent feature of the transactions of the Meeting; but in various ways, adapted to the degree of zeal and strength of our friends, it may be brought forward, and we may thus lead the Country, as in the year 1779, to more decisive measures hereafter in its support.—Excuse haste and inaccuracy. I only wish to state most briefly to both my worthy friends my reasons for coming forward without waiting for a greater strength, which the delay of a few months would probably insure, and my views in proposing a General Requisition, which will enable me to bring forward Parliamentary Reform in some shape or other.

Ever your's most cordially,

C. WYVILL.

P. S. After all, I rather apprehend Mr. H. Duncombe will lean to the cautious side. In that case, I shall certainly be inclined to it too.

LETTER

## LETTER III.

*From J. R. FENWICK, Esq; to the Rev. C.  
WYVILL.*

My dear Sir,

**M**R. Place communicated to me the state of your Requisition; I refrained however from thanking you for your attention in desiring him to do so, and for your several communications on your views in Yorkshire, from my conviction that under such circumstances your activity would fill up the whole of your time with matter more essential than any which we could offer to your consideration. Politics are indeed a blank here, the most anxious for Peace are waiting for the issue of the present negotiations, not so much from confidence in Ministers, as from despair of any attention being paid to their Petitions. The Reformers feel the same despair; and while some are roused by it to the adoption, I fear, of principles which would lead to a more extensive change, not a few are sinking into a degrading indifference. The genuine Tories and High Churchmen are alone unchanged, and, amid the wrecks of our Constitution and our Credit, still boast, without a blush, of our Prosperity and Freedom. Neither have they softened their language with regard to the Popular Party; but openly attribute the Irish troubles to the escape of Traitors here, and praise the vigour of their Government that has discovered and punished crimes which the clemency of our Ministers and the insufficiency of

of our laws allowed to escape with impunity. Such, incredible as it may appear, is the general language of that Party. Amid these discouraging circumstances, I have however the satisfaction of finding that a numerous body of men are convinced of the necessity of Reform, and see through the pretences by which the Minister opposes it. They are numerous enough, I trust, to give us the victory, *if we meet*; but perhaps even they would flag in the event of a continued struggle, such as Yorkshire supported towards the close of the American War; and yet without a firm and continued effort can be ensured, it would be folly to hope that our opponents would respect us.

I yesterday saw with astonishment the Resolutions of the *Delegates* at Huddersfield, and the infamous reflections of the Editor of the York Paper. What men have you to contend with, and what must we think of the man by whose councils they are guided! I hope, Sir, you will not allow such conduct to disturb you. One must feel for one's Country when such men are applauded and supported, and indeed for one's self and family, who are embarked in the same vessel with them; but the extraordinary events of the day ought to make us look with some confidence to futurity. If the Friends of Liberty can preserve their temper, and use no other arms but those of reason, their ultimate success is inevitable. \*

Adieu,

\* The excellent Writer of this letter is as much distinguished by the warmth of his friendship as he is by the zeal and purity of his patriotism. In the former part of this letter, and in some of a  
prior

Adieu, Sir, may your Brother Freeholders  
soon open their eyes, and join you.

Believe me very sincerely your's,

J. R. FENWICK.

DURHAM, May 27th, 1797.

prior date, he has expressed, with great force, his indignation at the arbitrary conduct of the Minister, at the injustice and bigotry of many of his Supporters, and especially at the head-long rage which some of his Partizans in Yorkshire displayed against his Opponents, then endeavouring to animate the County peacefully to resist the pernicious system of his Administration. But with strong feelings of resentment at conduct which appears to him injurious to a Friend, or dangerous to the rights and welfare of the Nation, Dr. Fenwick possesses a powerful mind, which can controul its feelings, and which unites spirit and vigour with temper and moderation. At the close of this letter he intimates his advice to the Friends of Popular Rights never to depart from a pacific and rational mode of opposing what is oppressive in the conduct of Ministers, and of reforming what is corrupt in our Constitution. This is the joint suggestion of benevolence and sagacity, from a high-spirited Friend of Liberty at a moment of great national irritation; it is counsel adapted to every case of Reform which seems possible in our Constitution; and by constantly adhering to it Reformers will gain for the Public what can be gained, and what it is fitted to receive; and the progressive melioration of our condition will be secure and uninterrupted.

NUMBER

## NUMBER XIII.

*Containing the EDITOR'S Correspondence with  
JOHN CARTWRIGHT, Esq; CAPEL LOFFT,  
Esq; and WILLIAM WRIGHTSON, Esq; in  
the years 1797 and 1798.*

## LETTER I.

*From JOHN CARTWRIGHT, Esq; to the Rev.  
C. WYVILL.*

BROTHERHOFF FARM, 10th Dec. 1797.

My Dear Sir,

**I** Trust you have ere this received my *Ap-  
peal*, and hope you find it not ill calculated  
to promote the Cause of Reform on Consti-  
tutional principles. Excepting now and then,  
for short intervals, when I have trusted too  
far to the sincerity of Mr. Pitt and others, I  
never could have any confidence in the prac-  
ticability of any system of Reform, which  
must not in its own nature have the means of  
interesting in its favour the great mass of the  
People. Experience seems to have justified  
my opinion; and indeed it has rooted in my  
own mind this conviction.

Your prospect of a movement in Yorkshire  
gave me the greatest satisfaction. On such  
occasions the ignorance and the prejudices of  
the multitude must be allowed for, or what  
glorious things might be done! although fre-  
quently compelled to suppress much of what  
we know to be right! Yet I think you will  
agree with me, in its being highly important  
on

on every such occasion, that as much rectitude of principle as possible ought to be brought forth; so that although we gain but little ground at a time, we make sure of gaining some in readiness for the next occasion that presents itself.

The constitutional connexion of Representation and Taxation has never had so good an opportunity as the present, of taking hold of men's minds. It is an impression I have endeavoured to make in my late Essay; and it seems to be a very fit subject of strong resolutions in Popular Meetings. With respect to the removal of Ministers, I confess it is my hope that you may not find yourselves obliged to take that inferior ground. It is unworthy of a People contending for their Liberties; and it delays the hour of final success, by misdirecting the efforts, and wasting the strength of the People. You judge rightly in foreseeing an awful interval between a successful day in Yorkshire, and a triumphant one at Westminster. It is therefore of extreme importance that your leading steps should be in the true road of Reform. If Yorkshire take a right direction, the City of Westminster, I doubt not, will tread in the same path, and push a little farther. If good examples in the first instances are set, it is to be hoped other Counties and large Towns will speak in the same tone. I hope, therefore, you will in good time prepare the Resolutions to be moved in Yorkshire, that they may be thoroughly considered, and receive all the improvements which in the interval may occur

cur to you. Let them be in the tone of the best public feeling, and not only expressive of your own sense of our Country's situation, but, if possible, in an *instructive* form, so that they may at once teach others the principles of the Constitution, and inspire them with the spirit to stand forth in their vindication.

I hope you will address yourselves to the House of Commons. There is something unnatural and debasing in resorting to the Crown for the preservation of Liberty. Give us sterling English in your resolutions, and petition with the dignity of men determined to be free. Spare not the Boroughs; spare not the Borough-holding Peers; spare not that complicated system of corruption arising out of the manifold violations of the Constitution, by which our Country is so nearly brought to utter ruin. I should think you would do well to lay your foundation in a manly assertion of that grand principle which requires the union of Representation with Taxation. And that foundation might be widened and strengthened by another Resolution, asserting our right to be governed only by laws made with the concurrence of real Representatives.

After labouring in the cause of Reform so many years as you and I have done, we must be sensible how necessary it is to resist, even in our Friends, a temporizing spirit; and I think we cannot at this day want arguments to prove that nothing but virtue and courage, under the guidance of sound wisdom, can save our Liberties.

Be

Be so good as order half a dozen of the first numbers of the periodical pamphlet \* you mention, to be sent to Mr. Christopher Stainbank, bookseller, Boston. Mr. Barnard, of Boston, and myself, shall take them from him, and I will do my best endeavours to promote their sale.

But why does not Mr. Grey avail himself of the means of publishing political truth, which is infinitely more efficacious than writing, and which is in his hands. From his seat in the House of Commons he may speak to the millions. Of those who buy books the comparative number is as nothing, and, for the most part, they are already instructed. This secession is to me a grievous mortification. I have noticed Mr. Fox's apology, and think he had not well considered the measure. There is much argument in what he says; but it is the argument of one who has not gone to the bottom of the subject. With his strength of constitution and his eloquence, I think I could, from the theatre of St. Stephen's, make the whole People my willing auditory, and mould them in the cause of Liberty to my wish. Success attend your labours! †

Your's, dear Sir, very sincerely,  
J. CARTWRIGHT.

\* The Economist.

† It was the earnest wish of the Editor to be permitted to publish the letters of Major Cartwright; and with grateful thanks he acknowledges the alacrity of this truly honourable Patriot in complying with his request. The Editor's connection with the worthy Major commenced in the year 1780, at the first Meeting of Deputies; and it has been marked from the beginning with a dis-  
ference

P. S. I am to request you will favour me with the names of the principal Barristers who go your Circuit, as I expect to have a Cause to bring on at York in Spring. My *political* character being grossly attacked for the purpose of doing me a private injury, I shall of course prefer a Patriot Barrister. If Felix Vaughan be of that Circuit I shall employ him.

ference of sentiment, not on the principles of Political Liberty, for on them they were entirely agreed, but on the expedience of urging Popular Meetings to adopt a plan of Reformation stretched to the utmost extent of theoretical perfection. The Freeholders of Yorkshire, with whom the Editor had engaged himself, were more solicitous of practical utility, than earnest for any speculative improvements of the Constitution; and wished to meliorate the condition of their Countrymen by such gradual amendments as would evidently render Public Liberty more secure, yet without risking the calamities of a Civil War. The Inhabitants of the Metropolis with whom Mr. Cartwright was connected, were more accustomed to speculation; and their zeal for the correction of abuses was more generally felt; better informed; and animated by frequent discussion to a greater degree of warmth and enthusiasm. Hence the promptitude of the Citizens of the Capital to adopt views of the most extended Reform, with less timorous apprehension of its consequences. Hence the zealous adherence of many Citizens to the principle of Universal Suffrage, even after the County Associations had been formed on grounds far less extensive. And hence perhaps that difference of conduct in these two men, though perfectly agreed in principle, and with equal honesty pursuing Public Good, in part may be explained. Their measures originally might vary from their respective tempers and habits of thinking; but the variation was confirmed and continued by the position in which chance had placed them, and by their connection with men thus widely different in their political views.

The Editor willingly seizes this opportunity to offer the tribute of his applause to the long and virtuous perseverance of Major Cartwright in his political exertions, and to express his fullest conviction, that the publication of his Letters will justify his character in the opinion of every candid Reader, as a true Friend to his Country and its best interests: it will convince them that his zeal for Universal Representation was accompanied by the sincerest attachment to the Constitution in all its branches; and that, though he steadily looked to more extended views of political improvement, he yet proved himself ever ready to co-operate with the supporters of very limited plans; and to promote the attainment of their measures, though in his conception far short in beneficial effect of that more extensive Reform which, as a Theorist, and an Agent of the People, he had uniformly recommended.

## LETTER II.

Extract of a Letter from the Rev. C. WYVILL  
to JOHN CARTWRIGHT, Esq.

BURTON-HALL, Dec. 16, 1797.

Dear Sir,

I Have read your Appeal with much approbation of your reasoning in many parts of it, and with a perfect conviction of your good intention. Your petition, I observe with pleasure, is for a Reform on the principle of extending Suffrage to Taxed Householders: On that ground I could cordially agree with you; but to the reasoning which I find directed in some parts of the Appeal to recommend Universal Suffrage, I really could not give my approbation. It is introduced there, as I think, without necessity; and intends, I conceive, to confirm in many minds that apprehension which seems the principal impediment to any Reform, viz. that no encouragement can be given to the most moderate Reformers, without risking the total ruin of the Country, by bringing on a Reform on the principle of Universal Suffrage. Many there are, and I am myself of that number, who think a Reform on this principle of Universal Suffrage could not be effected without a Civil War: and therefore, that it ought not to be attempted to carry such a Reform, even if on its establishment after a Civil War, it might be expected to produce a peaceful and permanently happy settlement

of

of the State. But that is more than we expect. We think that in times of warm political debate, the Right of Suffrage communicated to an ignorant and ferocious Populace would lead to tumult and confusion: In more quiet times it might be peaceably, but it would be corruptly exercised. On either supposition Rational Liberty would not be improved by the change; and after a series of Elections disgraced by the most shameful corruption, or disturbed by the most furious commotion, we expect that the turbulence or venality of the English Populace would at last disgust the Nation so greatly, that to get rid of the intolerable evils of a profligate Democracy, they would take refuge, as the Romans did, under the protection of Despotic Power. I am far from hoping that you will accede to opinions thus hastily sketched, and contrary to your long habit of thinking; but I state them to you, because I consider you as a sincere well-wisher to your Country; and I flatter myself the statement may induce you to exert your argumentative talents, and great they certainly are, to press for Political Reformation on the more moderate principle of your petition, viz. the giving of the Right of Suffrage to Taxed Householders.

On this ground I hope we shall come forward in Yorkshire at some period not very distant, and with a better prospect of success than ever, if all sincere Friends of Liberty can be convinced, that "Clock-Work Regularity in the movements of the People" is necessary

to their success. This is the opinion of Mr. Erskine, and I heartily agree with him.

I am, dear Sir,  
with great esteem,  
your much obliged,

C. WYVILL.

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### LETTER III.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to WILLIAM  
WRIGHTSON, Esq.*

BURTON-HALL, Dec. 14, 1797.

My Dear Sir,

I Entirely agree with you in thinking that it has been, and still is prudent to suspend our 3d previous or Requisition Meeting; and also that it will not long be necessary or expedient to remain inactive. These Triple Taxes have thrown the Country into universal consternation; I never saw so rapid a change of sentiment as the proposal of them has occasioned. Still, however, many people flatter themselves that the Minister will not dare to go on with his plan. In this I conceive they are mistaken, yet it must be considered in the less-informed classes to be a natural mistake, at which we ought not to be surpris'd, when even men of such high respectability as Mr. Grey have adopted the same opinion, as I have been informed. A few days will probably put this question out of doubt, and the Minister having found no body will purchase the Old Land-Tax, and fearing in the present low  
state

state of the Funds to borrow 25 millions by funding Stock at 40, will have carried the plan of Triple Taxes through Parliament, as the only tolerable expedient for raising the Supplies for another Campaign. This, I think, will be the result of a few days mock debating in Parliament. After that, I trust we shall find the change in popular opinion is so firm and decided, that their continued support may be depended upon. But till then I think as you do, that we ought to rest upon our arms in the County, and even prevent if we can, any scattered firing of petitions from the Towns, which I find is talked of.

Accept, my dear Sir, the assurance of my most cordial esteem and concurrence with you in sentiment and in wish in the present arduous situation of affairs; and believe me  
Ever truly your's,

C. WYVILL.

P. S. The introduction of the Bill for prohibiting the exportation of corn seems to confirm the idea that Mr. Pitt is determined to carry the Triple Taxes against all opposition. He means it, I think, as a pacifier to the Lower Orders in London, hoping by giving them bread at a cheap rate to keep them quiet under the extraordinary burthen of taxes. But in the same proportion he must increase the disgust in the Country by the low price of corn, and the increased pressure of taxes coming on at the same time. In short, he knows not where to turn himself, yet will go on with this fatal War.

LETTER

## LETTER IV.

From W. WRIGHTSON, Esq; to the Rev.  
C. WYVILL.

My Dear Sir,

**I**T is now clear that the Minister will persevere in his plan of confiscation; and it is my opinion we ought to meet again at York. I have received letters from the trading part of the County, urging the propriety of a Meeting at this time. And I have sent an Advertisement to the County Papers, to fix January first for the adjourned Meeting to be held at Ringrose's at twelve o'clock. The Bill will pass the House of Commons on Thursday the 28th. We shall be in possession of the Clauses. I hope you will approve of what I have done; total inactivity perhaps might have been considered by our Enemies as a proof of weakness, and by our Friends as a dereliction of principle. At any rate it is a good thing to keep up a standard for those who are well disposed to fly to. The Meeting may adjourn or not as they think proper, but under all the circumstances I should not feel that I had discharged the trust reposed in me, if I had not fixed a day for the adjourned Meeting to be held.\*

I am, dear Sir, your's most faithfully,

W. WRIGHTSON.

Cusworth, 22d Dec. 1797.

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LETTER

\* The Editor offers his sincere thanks to William Wrightson, Esq; for the permission to publish this letter, which, notwithstanding that the date of it is recent, he granted with an alacrity by which the favour was much increased. From other letters of his

## LETTER V.

From CAPEL LOFFT, Esq; to the Rev.  
C. WYVILL.

TRUSTON, 20th Dec. 1797.

Dear Sir,

**I** Have been making what individual effort I could against Mr. Pitt's delusive and baneful project of aggravated taxation, when the middle class, and consequently those connected with this class for employment and support, are sinking under their present burthens. I say individual, for what else was left in this County after the experience of the Spring, when the Sheriff refused to call a Meeting on such an occasion, and to sign a Requisition; and when seven Householders could not be induced to call one, under the dark, humiliating, and ensnaring perplexities of Mr. Pitt's Bill.

his worthy correspondent he selected this for publication, because while it paints the distress and indignation of the Country under the increasing load of taxes, at the period of its date, it well describes in a few words the feelings of the contending parties; the anxiety and jealous fears of those who were striving to defend the Constitutional Rights of the People, on one hand; and the haughty contempt on the other hand, which was too often broadly expressed for them by their adversaries, who applauded and supported every measure of the Ministers, however burthensome, however calculated to destroy those Rights. The Editor having long co-operated in Yorkshire with Mr. Wrightson, trusts he may be allowed to bear his testimony to the perfect integrity and disinterested zeal of this cool and judicious, but firm and determined Patriot. If the Liberty of this Country is to be preserved or restored, it must be preserved or restored by men of this character; it must be saved not by the Paines and Barlows, the Gerald and Margarots of the age, but by the Wrightsons, the Shores, and the Stricklands, the Bigges and the Fenwicks, assisted by men practically accommodating, like Cartwright and Lofft, and animated and led on by the wisdom and energy of a Fox, a Sheridan and a Grey, a Howard and a Russel, a Stanhope and a Petty.

Such

Such a sensation this project has made every where, that I believe with judicious and reasonable exertion it would be very possible to get rid of this hateful and fallacious impost, and of the Ministry; and eventually, I hope, of the War together. But if this moment be not improved, destruction inevitable, and I doubt, speedy, seems to hang over us.

Mr. Cartwright wrote to Mr. Fox, stating the reasons against the Secession, and indicating the line of certain glory and usefulness. I am glad that unwise, and I think unjustifiable measure is in a manner abandoned, though I am clearly of opinion Mr. Fox ought to have combated the Bill in detail in the Committee, as well as opposed it on the inequality, injustice, and ruinous delusiveness of its general principle.

I think it is likely that the present Minister has so shocked and disgusted his supporters out of doors by this weak and cruel proposition, that not improbably his fall is at hand.

It seems certain that a succeeding Ministry, to whose lot it must fall to negotiate Peace, will have to negotiate upon terms so short of the habits and expectations of this Country, that they cannot remain six months in office, unless they rest themselves on the basis of the most unequivocal and extensive Public Benefits, a great and comprehensive, economical and constitutional Reform, on principles of union, tranquility, and permanence.

What the will of Providence may be concerning us, I think with awful apprehension. But if we are to be preserved, if the Constitution, if English Liberty, and all that is truly

great and valuable to us is to be continued, the excess of our evils seems to have opened to us for a moment the door of preservation.

Those of us who are for Universal Suffrage, on principle you see would unite with you who contemplate a plan of Reform short of this as more safe. Be the plan but on principles of fair and equal comprehension so far as it goes, and open to such future improvement as time and experience and ameliorated state of Society may progressively shew to be safe and proper ; be it but of sufficient efficacy to correct the present great and destructive abuses, and to place a strong and well observed barrier against their return, I believe nearly all the considerate Friends of Freedom would now be satisfied ; and the times are such, and threaten more and more to become such as to force consideration on the most thoughtless.

I hope to be favoured with a line to know how you go on in Yorkshire.

I remain with great respect and esteem,

Dear Sir, your obliged friend,

CAPEL LOFFT.

## LETTER VI.

*From* JOHN CARTWRIGHT, Esq; *to the* Rev.  
C. WYVILL.

BROTHERTOFT FARM, 25 Dec. 1797.

My Dear Sir,

**T**HE observations in your letter of the 16th being very important, and on a subject which lies at the foundation of all free Government

Government and National happiness, I had intended to have waited for a day of leisure from a great pressure of private business now on my hands, to have given you my thoughts; but the urgency of the times impels me to be more expeditious.

I shall now shortly say that my apology for introducing the subject of Universal Suffrage into my late Pamphlet is therein given, and indeed I incline to think it a sufficient one. From the supposed obnoxiousness of this principle, our insidious adversaries artfully attack Reform in such a mode that it cannot on any other ground be completely defended. I see no cause to decline such a defence, although I may perhaps, in some degree, accord with those who think a part of the Community too ignorant and vicious to make a right use of Political Liberty. I hope, however, that such would make but a small number, *provided the exercise of that Liberty were but under wise regulations.* In arguing for a principle, I have a right to presume that it is to be accompanied with suitable laws for giving it its proper effect, and for preventing its abuse. So guarded, I can scarcely, even in the present state of Society, imagine the adoption of the principle into practice really dangerous. But to detail those laws would require some time and thought.

On the old maxim of teaching a young archer to shoot at the moon, in order that he may acquire the power of throwing his arrow far enough for practical purposes, I have always thought that a free discussion of the

principle of Universal Suffrage the most likely means of obtaining any Reform at all worth contending for. And I request you to observe in what quarter, and from what exertions in the Cause of Reform have there been made any decided and steady Converts to the Cause. Had not the principle of Universal Suffrage been freely discussed, I believe we should even now have had to begin again where we took up the business at the end of the American War. Instead of which, I trust we have now a solid foundation laid in a knowledge of the true principles of Political Liberty; and I am perfectly convinced that we are in no sort of danger, if a danger it be, of an adoption of the dreaded principle. It is, however, the fear of that principle that must produce us the concession of the Taxed Householders; was there nothing behind to excite that fear, we should be treated to the end with that contempt we have too often experienced. Perhaps few will be thought more strenuous than myself in favour of the extended system. If then I join in petitioning for the limited system, and am ready to declare that I believe the Country would be safe if so much could be obtained, can more be expected? In support of a plan, having in it the limitation alluded to, I am desirous of giving my most hearty concurrence. On the other point respecting *duration*, I own my mind goes decidedly to Annual in preference to Triennial Parliaments, and for many strong reasons which have for a course of years occupied my mind, and against which I see none but

but what appear to me to originate either in a corrupt principle on the part of the Objecters, or in a most unnecessary fear on the part of the Reformers. I am for holding to the *safe* point with inflexible steadiness. It must in time be conceded to us. The argument touching those who are unfit for Political Power, by reason of their ignorance and ferocity, is here altogether out of the question. The question is simply which duration of Parliaments bids fairest to preserve their purity, and is most consistent with the National Rights and the principles of free Government. The arguments in favour of Annual are in my estimation unanswerable.

In favour of a plan for Annual Elections, and including the Taxed Householders, no exertion of mine shall ever be wanting; and I am well convinced that even a vast majority of those Societies that have distinguished themselves by asserting the doctrine of Universal Suffrage, would cheerfully and gladly acquiesce, so that no fear whatever could remain of any future attempts to push matters further. I speak this from conversations I have had with men who have influence amongst them.

I have just penned a Requisition for Meetings as soon as the thunder-clap of Assessment shall have staggered the People. Having endeavoured to render it a good model, I submit it to your judgment. It seems advisable, in our very Requisitions, to give all possible *instruction*, to keep party out of sight, and not to lead the People round the mountain, but

streight and directly to their object. Plainness and simplicity are much to be attended to, and to inculcate strong principles in temperate language. As one is our common cause, so as much unity as possible should run through our proceedings, that the final object of the struggle may be simplified and deeply rooted in every man's understanding and heart. I send the draught of this Requisition to Mr. Fox and to Norwich, for adoption or amendment; and if I receive any hints for its improvement, shall be happy to adopt them before I push it here.

It is as follows:—To call Meetings, in order to consider the following propositions, viz.

1st, Whether a national debt, of above 400 millions sterling, (of which about 300 millions have been contracted in the present reign) doth, or doth not, furnish a reasonable presumption that the House of Commons, as now constituted, is inadequate to the guardianship of the public purse?

2d, Whether it be, or be not, consistent with the English Constitution, or promises a better œconomy in future, that a *very large proportion* of the seats in the House of COMMONS should be in the gift, or at the disposal of PEERS; and that a *decided majority* of its Members should owe their Elections, not to the collective Body of the Nation whom they are intended to represent, but to ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY FOUR INDIVIDUALS; which circumstances are stated to be facts, in a Petition entered on the Journals of that House, on the 6th day of May, 1793?

3d, Whether

3d, Whether the Representation of the People in Parliament ought, or ought not, to be reformed on the principles of our excellent Constitution?

4th, Whether a reformed, or an **UNREFORMED** House of Commons, be most likely to alienate the minds of the People from a Government of King, Lords, and Commons, and thereby to endanger the Public Peace, the King's Throne, and the English Constitution, as well as to reduce this once free and flourishing Nation to poverty, slavery, and ruin?

And, 5th, Whether a Petition to the House of Commons, concisely expressing the sentiments of the Meeting on the foregoing propositions, ought, or ought not, to be presented?

Favour me with your corrections and ideas on an unity of exertions.

In great haste, and the greatest esteem,

Your's very sincerely,

J. CARTWRIGHT.

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LETTER VII.

*From the Rev. C. WYVILL to JOHN CARTWRIGHT, Esq.*

BURTON-HALL, Dec. 29, 1797.

Dear Sir,

**T**HE Resolutions above have been seen and approved by the leading Friends of Reform in the Counties of Durham and Northumberland, and also by Mr. Fox. I have  
also

also shewn them to my Friends in Yorkshire, who approve them; so that if you and Mr. Lofft should be satisfied with them, the requisite uniformity, I hope, may be secured. My intention is, to move these Resolutions \* at a *Meeting* of this County, but whether at the *Meeting* which is likely to be held before the end of January, or at a subsequent, is more than I can at present determine; it will depend on the temper of the Yorkshire Gentlemen. I can only say, that I will do my best to bring it on at the next.

With respect to the duration of Parliament, *that*, I think, would be a subject better post-

\* For these Resolutions see the Preliminary Papers near the end. They were drawn up in the Autumn of 1797, in terms as cautious and guarded as possible, with a view to form the centre of Union of the whole Reforming Party; they were communicated to many Yorkshire Gentlemen, to Mess. Lofft and Cartwright, Fenwick and Bigge, and also to Mr. Fox and Mr. Grey, by whom they were approved. The struggle in Yorkshire to obtain a County Meeting was continued chiefly with a view to promote the adoption of this measure, in which case it is highly probable that similar measures would have been pursued in Durham and Northumberland; and even the most eager Reformers would willingly have confined their exertions to promote the success of this plan. It was in contemplation also to give still more effectual aid to the measure, by forming a legal Association, in which Yorkshire, Durham, Northumberland, and the North-Western Counties of Cumberland and Westmoreland would have been more closely united in this pursuit. But views which seemed easily practicable, and to promise a successful issue to the enterprise of the Parliamentary Reformers, could not be realized; many of the Yorkshire Gentlemen had abandoned the Cause of Reform in a panic from which they never have recovered; others, though most steadily attached to that Cause, were at that time too much dispirited to seize the proffered opportunity, which soon passed away, perhaps not to return to this Generation. The impossibility to move Yorkshire, convinced the worthy Friends of Liberty in the four more Northern Counties, that to persevere in the attempt, on their part would probably be fruitless, if not prejudicial to that Cause; and their intention to summon those Counties to meet was laid aside.

poned to some Meeting after that which may have petitioned for a Reform in the Representation, or, at least, it seems advisable not to blend it in the same Petition with the amendment of the Representation, and to go no farther respecting it, in this first stage, than some previous Resolution for the Repeal of the Septennial Bill.

The grand business is that of the Representation. If we obtain a good Reform in this respect, the rest will follow of course.

The Resolutions you have sent for my opinion, may be very well adapted to Meetings already conversant in these subjects, and eager to petition for redress; but I think they would hardly be proper for many of the Counties, and not even for Yorkshire at the ensuing Meeting.

But I do not imagine it is material that the same preliminary steps be taken, if the result at least be the same in the various Meetings.

I have found it necessary here to propose a very indeterminate form of Requisition; but I hope at previous Meetings to bring the Gentlemen into our views.

Excuse great brevity, and believe me,

Dear Sir,

With much regard, your's ever,

C. WYVILL.

LETTER

## LETTER VIII.

*From CAPEL LOFFT, Esq; to the Rev. C.  
WYVILL.*

TROSTON, 3<sup>d</sup> Jan. 1797.

Dear Sir,

**Y**ESTERDAY brought me your very obliging letter. I think the Resolutions proposed will meet the concurrence of Mr. Cartwright, (judging from his late excellent publication) and, as far as I can be of any use, I see nothing in them to prevent my willingly co-operating. But I am nearly convinced that nothing (unless some sudden and great calamity) would be likely to produce a really Public Meeting in this County, during the continuance of the present councils and measures, and of those two most ensnaring and unconstitutional Laws, the Grenville and Pitt Bills, if Laws they must be called; though I agree with the doctrine of Cicero, and of the late eloquent Author of the "Defense des Emigrés," that they want the spirit and essential character of true Laws.—The Public Meeting Act would in application, according to the spirit of it, have totally the reverse effect, and be "Sanctio injusta, jubens inhonesta, prohibens contraria."

In the 2<sup>d</sup> Resolution, should not "removed" be preferred to "abated," though the prediction of the Father of Mr. Pitt seems hastening to an awful accomplishment, and if these nuisances be not speedily removed, it seems likely that they will be abated (abbatues) with tremendous force.

Might

Might not such Resolutions as these (I mean not for the wording) be preferred:

1. That since the exertions of the Yorkshire and other Associations for obtaining œconomy in the expenditure of the public money had been in some degree successful, a far more wasteful expenditure had taken place, accompanied with most unconstitutional and oppressive means of supply.

2. That it is in vain, from suggested care of posterity, to œconomize ruin as their inheritance.

3. That the only effectual and permanent œconomy must be preceded by a radical Reform in the Representation of the People in the Commons House of Parliament.

4. That without this, Peace may be procrastinated till even Peace would come too late; the resources of War, when War should unhappily be unavoidable, or should rashly be recommenced, would be wasted, and in the end destroyed; and there would be no reasonable expectation of permanent benefit from any councils or any Administration.

Submitting these to your thoughts as far as the better judge of local and other circumstances,

I remain, with great esteem,

Dear Sir, your obliged friend,

CAREL LOFFT.

P. S. I think Mr. Erskine might by his eloquence and popularity render great service to the Cause of Reform. And I agree as to the necessity (which was also the sentiment of the

the so justly regretted Sir Wm. Jones) "of Clock-Work Regularity" in the conduct of this measure, which every day proves to be more necessary, and which almost every moment of delay endangers as to the temper, moderation, and thought with which it requires to be conducted.

I wish Mr. Erskine had not lessened his usefulness by taking any part in the prosecution against Mr. Williams as Publisher of the *Age of Reason*.

"Non tali auxilio, nec defensoribus istis  
"Numen eget."

#### LETTER IX.

*From* JOHN CARTWRIGHT, Esq; *to the Rev.*  
C. WYVILL.

BROTHERTOFT FARM, 5th Jan. 1798.

My Dear Sir,

**I** WAS so peculiarly circumstanced that I have waited for hearing from you I found would hazard our getting a Meeting while it would be in my power to attend, as I have a journey to make towards the end of the month. When your letter arrived, it was too late to alter what was prepared. I trust, however, what we give out to the Public cannot with you have any ill effect. I persuade myself it may have a good one. Whenever we can serve the cause of Reform, without withholding important truths, they must produce the best effects.

After

After so many years of meditation and watchfulness as you have known, it must be extremely mortifying to you to be now obliged to act with nearly as much reserve and caution as when Reform was just talked of. Considering the great disadvantages under which you labour, in having an uninformed and an immense County to wield, I cannot but say, I wish the Metropolis might get the start of you, as likely to take more decisive ground than you dare attempt, unless after such an example. I am but little afraid of your Yeomanry, but your *Gentlemen* I dread. All your knowledge in the science of Civil Government, and of our Constitution, will not, I suspect, be sufficient to secure you that deference which ought to wait on you; but you will be teased and counteracted by men who will be presumptuous, because they have not learned that they are ignorant; and who, in the wrong place, will be pusillanimous, because they have no longer the spirit of their ancestors.

The smallness of the theatre on which I now act, the vicinity of Boston, gives me on many accounts great advantages. It is also fortunate for me that hitherto all the *Gentlemen*, except one, have been on the *other side*. My efforts, therefore, have not been maimed by their councils, and I have on all occasions spoken out. I think I perceive the good effects of having been thus at liberty, nor do I now despair of converts even amongst that class of men.

A want

A want of success on former occasions has somewhat damped the spirits of our well-disposed, but not veteran troops, as to farther Petitions; but if your County and others should get into motion before our Meeting, it may revive their courage. If we are flat, our adversaries are covered with shame and despondency, so that a small matter will give us animation.

It is because of the flatness I perceive that, in a great degree, I have thought it right to speak, in the annexed proposition, home truths, and to touch on radical principles. In truth, the Nation is hastening to ruin with so much rapidity, that I feel as if nothing but strong cordials, and the most powerful stimulants, can awaken the People to any thing energetic. We must ourselves manifest the strength of our own feelings, or we cannot, as I think, arouse to any beneficial feeling the torpid People.

Unless our appeals convince all understandings, and the truths we utter irresistibly seize on the heart, we shall do nothing. In so lamentable a situation, if you should, in order to get on at all, be compelled to propose mere expedients short of such energetic appeals, I hope in God you will be rescued from the situation by some strong-minded men at your Meeting, who may rouse it to a true sense of the public malady and its only cure.

In addition to our announced motions, I have in reserve one grounded on Mr. Fox's late

late Parliamentary declaration, as disinterested, noble, truly constitutional, and wisely adapted to the melancholy situation of his Country; and we hope such a declaration from that able Statesman will serve as a powerful admonition to those who have hitherto inclined to trust in palliatives for curing the corruptions of the State, that nothing short of the Reform proposed can preserve our Liberty or our Property, which we trust the English Nation will disdain to hold at the good pleasure of any of its servants; and which can only be safe under the guardianship of real Representatives fairly and annually chosen by the Nation's uninfluenced voice.

If circumstances would admit, I should like also to resolve, That, duly considering the striking contrast between the relative conditions of England and France in the beginning of the year 1793—the one (notwithstanding her debt and her defective Representation) in a situation of safety, prosperity, and power; the other, in every point of view, the very reverse, and at the moment likely to be overwhelmed by the most formidable armies in Europe; it is not credible that a French War might not by wise and dignified negotiation have been avoided with honour, to the incalculable advantage of their Country. And

That attending to the declaration made in the House of Commons on the 4th day of December by a Cabinet Minister, who said that even *Peace* he must deprecate, if it were to be followed by *Parliamentary Reform*; we

see but too clearly the horrible spirit in which this War was conceived;—a War only to be rationally accounted for, from the deadly hostility of its authors to the Constitution of their own Country;—a War they have not abilities to conduct, nor can now bring to an honourable issue;—a War in which they have been most successful in attacking our Liberty, and in taking our Property; and a War in which they have raised France to be the Arbiter of Europe, whilst by all its belligerent Nations England is abandoned, her counsels rejected, and her power despised.

Perhaps the three last Resolutions should not be included in the body of our Petition, into which, with a short preamble and a concise conclusion, I thought of transcribing all the others verbatim.

Anxiously wishing you every success, I remain, with great esteem,

Dear Sir,

Very sincerely your's,

JOHN CARTWRIGHT.

P. S. Will it not be wise to take the simple obvious qualification of Householders paying taxes, in preference to any thing complex? It ought to include every man of any property, whether Freeholder, Copyholder, or Leaseholder.

LETTER

## LETTER X.

*From CAPEL LOFFT, Esq; to the Rev. C.  
WYVILL.*

TROSTON, 11th Feb. 1798.

Dear Sir,

**Y**ESTERDAY brought me your letter, by which I am much obliged. I think the reasons assigned in the Address of February 7th to the Freeholders of Yorkshire \* are conceived with ability, and expressed with force.

If a sudden and very awful crisis does not take place in the mean-time, I think it highly probable that the effect of the Meeting will be greater for the postponement intimated of the application to the Sheriff.

\* For this Address see the last Preliminary Paper prefixed to the Correspondence of this Volume. The Meeting at York on the 1st of January, 1798, which Mr. Wrightson had called and announced in his letter to the Editor of the 22d of December, 1797, had agreed to no material Resolution, but to adjourn to the 7th of February, 1798. On that day, a Body of Gentlemen were assembled, superior in their number, and equal in weight of property, and in their zeal for Liberty and Reform, to any Meeting of the Committee of Association which was appointed by the County of York eighteen years before. Yet on considering the increase of Ministerial influence, the eagerness of the mercantile interest to oppose, who before had acquiesced in their plans, and that some of the persons of highest rank, and the most extensive Landed Property in Yorkshire, who formerly had espoused their Cause, were become hostile to it, or by their death had transmitted the influence they had enjoyed to men unfortunately prejudiced against all Reform, they prudently resolved to postpone their intended enterprise, and adopted the Address alluded to. Their conduct was regretted and approved by the Friends of Political Reformation, who generally forbore moving throughout the Kingdom. They were, however, united in a firm Body, zealous for Peace and Reform, and they looked forward with a confident hope of success at no great distance of time, from the expected return of the Nation to its wonted sentiments of Freedom. The Correspondence of a subsequent Volume will sufficiently explain the disappointment of their views.

Bnt we are in circumstances emphatically, when we know not what a day may bring forth.

As to this County, I expect no present efforts either for Peace or Reform, or change of measures and men. It has been one of the leading Counties in all these respects. At present if it follow Yorkshire, London and Westminster, Middlesex, and the other Counties where the popular interest is more entire and in better spirits, I shall almost feel contented, if Suffolk is not the last. Of Cambridgeshire I have considerably better hopes, and the vicinity of that would animate this, yet lately even in Cambridgeshire the disappointment of a Public Meeting was strange and mortifying, though there appears to have been no want either of abilities or spirit.

*al* I shall wait with hope for your success. As to invasion, the best security in my mind against it is this, that the invasion of such taxes and of such encroachments on the Constitution, is a certain ruin, which may naturally induce an adversary, however enterprising and enraged, to forbear from the perilous and precarious attempt of ruining us in any other way than that which our Ministers have chosen, except by keeping us in a state of constant, and (to our finances) insupportable alarm.

I remain, dear Sir, with great esteem,

Your obliged and obedient servant,  
CAPEL LOFFT.

LETTER

## LETTER XI.

*From* JOHN CARTWRIGHT, Esq; *to the Rev.*  
C. WYVILL.

BROTHERTOFT FARM, 23<sup>d</sup> February, 1798.

Dear Sir,

**I** HAVE been but three days returned from a journey I was upon, when favoured with the York Address. I believe you are perfectly right in postponing your Meeting, and preparing your County for the occasion; but as the decision at the intended Meeting may affect the fate and happiness of England for ages to come, for God's sake look well to the consequences of a defeat; consider the immense extent of Yorkshire, and the spirit too prevalent amongst its merchants and the higher ranks in Society. These to a man will pour in upon you, with all the dependents they can muster; while those who constitute your strength (the manufacturers) cannot be expected to attend in great numbers. Have you looked forward to your danger, and provided against it?

Supposing there may be in Yorkshire a decided and a very large majority in your favour, it would be grievous to be foiled for want of prudence, or to be out-generalled by your adversaries.

I am not without correspondence in Yorkshire, from which I infer success to your efforts, provided they shall be directed with

foresight and sound policy; and anxious in the highest degree that the Cause of Reform should triumph, I wish to suggest to you what has occurred to me on the subject. If adopted, it will secure you against the possibility of a defeat, or the ill effects of an unfavourable vote of a General County Meeting.

As your object is to take the sense of the *County*, take your measures accordingly: A General Meeting at York may by no means represent, or speak the sentiments of the County. At a crisis so awful, and so soon after what happened at your last General Meeting, I fear it will be too much to risque, to put, as it were, your cause on the issue of one pitched battle.

There are different views of conduct which might be adopted. I shall only speak of two of them. One is, to call a General Meeting to consider on the State of the Nation; announcing, at the same time, that your Committee will be prepared with a Petition for Reform, which they have already signed, and shall then recommend to the signature of all such as may approve of it, leaving those of other sentiments to their own mode of expressing them to the Legislature. Or, instead of this, you might so express yourselves in your Requisition as to leave it in your power, according to the complexion of the Meeting when assembled, either to adopt such a mode of proceeding, or to hazard a vote. I am aware there are considerable objections to both these modes, and therefore the other  
alternative

alternative I have to suggest may be worth your consideration.

It is for your Committee to employ themselves in preparing a composition which shall do honour to the age, by way of Petition, to divide the whole County into Districts of a small extent; to entrust to a Committee-man the canvassing each District for signatures, not only Parish by Parish, but House by House, by himself in person, or by zealous and active Agents in whom he can confide. By such an exertion, an exertion which of all things is most practicable, you might have a Petition that would load a stage-waggon to convey it to London.

And if you managed with any tolerable skill, it ought to be in rapid circulation in every Parish in the County, before your adversary was prepared to take a step.

On such an occasion, it might be advisable for those who should canvass to be provided with an animated Address from the Committee, not only appealing to the understanding and the heart of an Englishman, but by way of an authority to the Gentleman who should offer the Petition; although the canvass, if possible, should always be conducted by persons known to the inhabitants.

Should you approve of these hints, perhaps it might be prudent, in the first place, to consult with those Gentlemen whose talents and judgment are likely to have most weight with the Committee, in order to have a plan well digested before it should be proposed;

and as secrecy until the hour of execution draw nigh, would be of some importance, the select few should not be hasty in developing the plan adopted, but should communicate it gradually only to other Gentlemen, in whose steadiness they could confide, and should endeavour to secure their hearty concurrence before the circle were extended.

But I am running into detail, when I had nothing to do but to furnish a hint. You will, I trust, impute it to a zeal which is apt to run away with me.

Your Address, on the whole, I think very judicious. When you come to your Petition, I have only to hope you have in your Committee strong-minded men, who will see the wisdom of speaking the true language of the Constitution respecting the duration of Parliament. Recollect, that if you can settle that point in the Committee, for one taxed Householder who who will startle at the word *annual*, there will be five hundred that prefer it to *triennial*. And I trust that your line of Representation will be drawn at the *taxed Householder*, on account of its simplicity and extent. On another account also it is highly important, at this crisis of our Country's fate, to go, in both respects, thus far. It will furnish you with an answer to the anxious question of the Alarmist, "Where is Reform to stop?"—If the line, in the first instance, be drawn at these points, we may expect credit when we say, "Here Reform is to stop." But if from a timid and weak policy we attempt  
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the work by halves, we shall not be believed if we pretend that it is all we mean to ask; and I leave you to judge of the consequences.

We did not meet at Boston on the 24th of January, the invitation being withdrawn on account of a manœuvre played off against us in the way of anticipation; but I trust we shall come forward again with increased strength, after you shall have taken the field: mean-while, I am preparing a second Appeal, in consequence of the manœuvre alluded to.

A second edition of the First Appeal, of which 1000 copies were printed, is also called for, and will be published. I mean, in answer to the question, "Where is Reform to stop?" to draw the lines above-mentioned; and to demonstrate that, if granted in due time, it cannot go farther.

With my warmest wishes for your success, and with that esteem and affection to which your perseverance in the Cause of Liberty entitles you, I am,

Dear Sir, your's,

J. CARTWRIGHT.

P. S. On looking again at your Address, I see it is directed to the *Freeholders*. This, however, cannot prevent your proposing Representation to be extended to the *Householder*. If you cannot well avoid having a General Meeting, and yet think it advisable not to hazard the grand object, a Petition upon a *vote*, you may determine, at all events, on petitioning in the way I suggest, and, as ob-  
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jects of voting, prepare *Resolutions*, which may be such truisms as cannot be got rid of without disgrace to those who vote against them,

## APPENDIX.

## APPENDIX.

# APPENDIX

**CONSIDERATIONS**

ON THE

**TWOFOLD MODE OF ELECTION**

ADOPTED BY

**THE FRENCH.**

**T**O the polished Nations of Antiquity, though they abounded with men, learned, inquisitive, and anxious for the secure enjoyment of Liberty, Political Representation was unknown. The discovery and establishment of that invaluable regulation for uniting Liberty and Order in an extensive Society, was reserved for the rude Nations of the North, by whom the Roman Empire was overthrown. It was the happy effect not of politic contrivance, or of extraordinary powers of thought, searching for and discovering what the Greeks and Romans had missed, but the result of plain good sense, placed in circumstances different from theirs, and by those circumstances compelled to adopt a different plan of Liberty. The free States of Antiquity were in their origin small, consisting usually of the City and a scanty territory around it. The ease with which all the Citizens of such small States could assemble and conduct the business of Government,

ment, without material inconvenience, naturally led to the establishment of Democracy. And when the progressive aggrandizement of such Democratic States began to introduce tumult and disorder to a dangerous degree, it was found to be an insuperable difficulty to persuade Citizens, high minded and jealous of their sovereign authority, to submit to any abridgment of their power, though calculated to render it more durable, and even to themselves more beneficial. The idea of Popular Representation perhaps never occurred to any of the Political Philosophers of Greece or Italy; or, if it did occur, it must have been dismissed at once from their minds, as an innovation of the sovereign Rights of the People, which could not be proposed with the least chance of success, or without imminent peril to the Proposer. But Chance proved more favourable to the Conquerors of the Roman Empire. Large portions of it were seized by the Goths, the Saxons, the Franks, &c. The Freedom which the various Tribes had brought from the Forests of Germany and Scandinavia, was still their prevailing passion; but the extent of the territory they had conquered, and the necessity to unite in large Communities to preserve it, obliged them gradually to introduce orderly Representative Assemblies, instead of those ill-regulated Meetings of the Germans which Tacitus describes; which were adapted only to small Communities, and at which the attendance of the far greater portion of each Nation, in its aggrandized state, was plainly impracticable.

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On this principle of simple Representation, the Nations of modern Europe were happily governed for many years. At last, their States General were set aside, or rendered inefficient and totally useless to the Community, by the force or fraud of their usurping Monarchs, and Political Liberty was lost in the larger and more populous Countries which are situated on the western side of Poland and the Russian Empire. The Parliament of Britain alone escaped the fate of the Continental Assemblies: It exists, and it continues to act; but it acts with too much dependence on the Crown and a few Noble Families to be the Controuler of their Power: It exists, but in a state of decay, tainted with corruption formerly unknown, and disgraced by complaints of abuse which it neither corrects nor dares to deny. It has ceased to be honoured and beloved as the faithful Guardian of our Rights; it may protract a precarious existence, but the distrust of the Public can only be cured by the Reformation of Parliament.

In Venice, and some other small Aristocratic Republics, the refinement of the Twofold Election was introduced at a period when the simple Election of States and Parliaments had long been known, but with no favourable effect to General Liberty. From the practice of Venice, however, about the middle of the 17th century this supposed improvement on simple Representation was adopted in the writings of a Political Philosopher\*, whose zeal for Popular Rights is unquestionable,

\* Harrington.—See his Oceana.

questionable, and whose profound skill in the science of Legislation has seldom, if ever been surpassed. At that time, his Countrymen had begun to be dissatisfied under the oppressions of that Army by which Charles the First had been dethroned. But, instead of assisting them to restore and to meliorate the Constitution which they had lost, and were ardently wishing to recover, he endeavoured to persuade them to establish a new form of Republican Government, improved, as he conceived, by the regulations of the Ballot and the Twofold Representation. On that occasion, the judgment of Harrington seems to have been misled by specious novelties, whose effects he had not sufficiently considered. But fortunately his zeal and great abilities were unable to recommend these devices to the acceptance of the Nation, or to resist the current of opinion which more and more decidedly ran to bring back our ancient Form of Government. In more modern times, the doctrines of the Oceana found in the philosophic Hume a strenuous admirer. He borrowed the Ballot and the Twofold Election, with some variations, from the Oceana, and improved his own imaginary Commonwealth by correcting the most obvious defect of his Predecessor's plan.

By a strange inadvertence in a Politician so devoted to the People, Harrington had omitted to establish the means by which they might regularly obtain Redress of their Grievances. In Hume's idea of a perfect Commonwealth this defect is supplied; but at the same

same time the Right of Suffrage\* is narrowed by him, with a dread of Popular Election, which is not strange indeed in a speculator like Hume, acute and profound, but less friendly than Harrington to the interests of the People. At a later period, during the giddy whirl of the Revolution, the Twofold Election, unhappily for France, was recommended by the Philosophers of that Country. By their advice the speculations of Hume and Harrington were preferred to the safer mode of simple Representation, which with competent success had been practised in France for ages, and without difficulty might have been adapted to their modern condition. By the Constitution of 1791, Primary and Electoral Assemblies were established; the People were classed into active Citizens who possessed the requisite qualification of property, and with it a right to vote for Electors at the Primary Elections; and into passive Citizens who possessed not that property, and to whom that Right was therefore denied. Afterwards, by the influence of Robertspierre, the distinction cautiously introduced at first, was set aside, and every Citizen, without regard to property, was allowed to vote at Primary Assemblies. This was a specious measure, seemingly well adapted to reconcile theory and practical prudence; it gratified the wish of speculative men without alarming their fears; and it was praised by many. But in its tendency the Double mode of Election was a deceitful and pernicious refinement; it was a

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novelty

\* Viz. by qualifications of £10 a-year, or £200 in money.

novelty in France; and the adoption of it by their National Assembly, instead of retaining their own States-General, and their simple Representation with improvements, was one of those many indiscretions which prove the excess of their temerity.

Undoubtedly, as many causes contributed to bring on the Revolution, so errors still more numerous contributed to defeat it. The master error which dictated every impolitic measure, and ended in the final failure of the French Revolutionists, was their proneness to prefer theory to experience, and to sacrifice practical utility to an unattainable perfection. In their rash zeal for innovation, the Assemblies left almost nothing in France unchanged. Every possible experiment was tried, and novel measures succeeded each other in rapid succession. No plan was allowed to acquire the solidity of an establishment. By this rage for incessant change, the Revolutionary struggle was continued till the contending parties were exasperated to the utmost animosity; and thus France was desolated, and the Cause of Liberty was disgraced by multiplied crimes and horrors, from which the power of a Military Usurper at last seemed the only protection. The speculators who possessed the confidence of the People at an early period of the Revolution, ought to have considered that their plan might become too grand and too extensive to be realized; that more might be attempted than the French People were able to accomplish, more might be effected than they had the virtue to maintain. They should

should have been aware how dangerous it was to prolong the season of Revolutionary experiments, how necessary to close the struggle before the People were wearied with change, disgusted by disappointed hope, and either their rage, their dejection, or their despair would frustrate the attempt to give Freedom to the Nation.

Yet for the temerity of the French Philosophers, much as we may censure and lament its pernicious effects, some excuse, some extenuation may be pleaded. They acted in times of unparalleled heat and violence; and when the passions of the People were highly inflamed, it was scarcely possible that they could preserve their minds unwarped by the general ardour, and free from the enthusiasm of the Public. Into many of their imprudent measures, no doubt they were hurried by the impulse of their benevolence, hoping to repay the boundless confidence of the Public by conferring upon it benefits whose value passed all calculation; or deceived perhaps, as in the case of Twofold Election, by the specious supposition, that so the theory of Liberty might be reconciled with the peace and order of Society; and the mass of the People might be admitted, however remotely, to share the power of self government, without the introduction of tumult and confusion.

And this apology for the establishment of the Twofold Election in France seems to possess the greater force, from the approbation bestowed upon that measure by the Author of *Vindiciæ Gallicæ*; and still more so, from the

warmth of commendation expressed by Earl Stanhope on the passage contained in that book, which is cited in one of his Lordship's letters to the Editor. The sentiments declared in that book, whatever may be those which its learned Author may have chosen subsequently to profess, will always have great weight on political subjects.

Upon questions respecting the Rights of the People, and the various modes of Election, and their consequences more or less favourable to General Liberty, the authority of Earl Stanhope is greater still.

On preparing to publish a letter of that truly noble Patriot, in which the opinion of Mr. Mackintosh is cited in favour of the Two-fold Election, representing it as the very perfection of politic wisdom; and the superior weight of his own judgment is added to the same effect, it is incumbent on the Editor, since he differs most decidedly from those very able Political Philosophers, to state the reasons of his dissent, but with all that deference which is due to their joint opinion, and with that high esteem and that warmth of affectionate regard which he must ever feel for the public character of the noble Lord, and for his invariable friendship to himself.

If in the present prostrate state of the People in this Country the discussion should appear unnecessary, let it be considered that the times are critical, and marked by the production of great and unexpected events: the War renewed may be disastrous; or if not attended with military disaster, it may be a long

long War; it may demand a most distressing increase of a Taxation already enormous; popular distress may produce popular discontent; and our Government on the appearance of discontent may resort again to those severities which were thought necessary in the first War with the French Republic. The People, now so passive, so sunk in apathy and despair, have not forgotten their Rights as Englishmen, or lost their feelings as men. They may become sore from the pressure of accumulated distress; they may become indignant at acknowledged, but unreformed abuses; they may become impatient under the renewed severities which before provoked them; they have arms in their hands; they may demand Reform in a tone which must be complied with. On that emergency, whether dreaded or hoped from the mutability of the People, it may not be useless that one who had before endeavoured to dissuade them from the adoption of the new principle in our Constitution of the Ballot, had also endeavoured to convince them that the other new principle of the Twofold Election was still more inexpedient, and the adoption of it probably would be attended with still greater danger, even to the People themselves.

In the apprehension of the Editor, the Twofold Election is a device which would but deceive the hopes of the Public, giving the shadow for the substance of Liberty. It would indeed establish a Representative Government, drawn, but too remotely, from the mass of the People.

A Parliament so chosen, would be bound to them therefore by ties which would be nearly imperceptible; and it would feel for them, in no sensible degree, either sympathy or responsibility. In a Representative Assembly thus formed, the ablest and most eloquent of our Public Men might all be comprised; and yet the Assembly feeling no community of interest with the mass of the People, or none but in a very imperfect degree, would seldom or never act from views of public spirit, and by the dictates of true wisdom; it would not acquire the confidence of the Nation; it would not long resist corruption; and it would but preserve an ignominious existence by the servility of its compliance with the Executive Power.

The kindred measures of the Ballot and the Twofold Election might be suited to the temper and genius of that jealous Republic, from whence they were borrowed by Harrington. It might be expedient in Venice to introduce this mode of Election; that as the Ballot covered the intrigues and cabals of their Nobles, under the fair appearance of Suffrage freely and honestly, because secretly given, so the complex machinery, the privacy and quiet of the Double Election, might guard their power against those agitations of the public mind, and that extension of Liberty which the simple Election probably might produce. But, in every other supposable state of Society, the practice of the Twofold Representation seems to be either useless or positively disadvantageous. It would be a useless and impracticable

impracticable refinement for rude and uncivilised Nations: it would be an unnecessary incumbrance for Nations distinguished by superior virtue and wisdom; and though it may be thought applicable to Nations like the British, which are of a mixed character, advanced in opulence and the arts of life, without a corresponding advancement in virtue, possessing a free Constitution, but debased by corruption and abuses, yet in a course of years it may justly be feared it would produce evils of greater magnitude, and of more dangerous consequence to the Community, than those which it would prevent or palliate.

1. In a rude and semi-barbarous state of Society, the art of mental cultivation is unknown, or it is practised with little or no superior advantage by the Rich. Ignorance is nearly, or altogether, their lot as much as it is the lot of the Poor. The disparity therefore in wisdom and virtue which is found to exist between men of different classes, in a Community so circumstanced, is inconsiderable. Unimproved by the benefit of education, men in every class nearly resemble each other, and with such variations as natural ability and accidental events may produce, they are alike poorly qualified for the task of Legislation, or even for that of Election. To men in this condition, the artificial refinement of electing Electors has never been proposed. It is scarcely possible that it ever could be proposed to such men, without meeting instant rejection. But let it be supposed, that by some

extraordinary means this operose regulation has obtained admission in a Community so circumstanced. Is it not evident that it would perplex the simplicity and offend the pride of the People; that it would weary the indolent and impatient, and disgust those who were the best informed; and without producing the effect of a more enlightened Representation, the Double Election would destroy that community of interest and sympathy of feeling which ought ever to subsist between the mass of the People and their Representatives? And thus the Nation would lose the best security for Public Liberty, for the justice of those who govern, and the happiness of the governed, without a possibility of gaining any perceivable advantage.

2. In a Country in which the People were distinguished by simplicity of manners, and yet had attained a great degree of improvement in knowledge and virtue, with a distribution of property not extremely unequal, the regulation in question would be an unnecessary incumbrance; it would be a useless restriction of their social Rights; and without necessity, or the hope of benefit, to restrain those Rights never can be expedient. In such a condition of Society, there would be nothing to fear for the Community, either from the influence of an Aristocracy, or the licentiousness of the Populace. The baseness of corruption would be unheard of; the means of the Opulent would be inadequate to purchase the Suffrage of the People; the attempt thus to carry an Election would be infamous: the virtuous and enlightened

enlightened Poor would spurn at the offer of a bribe, and the Rich would be too nobly minded to tender it. The attempt to decide an Election by means of tumult would be still more sure to meet disgrace and disappointment, and it could not escape the severity of the laws, because it would excite general indignation. In such a State, the Twofold Election would be a waste of time and trouble to guard against evils which neither existed, nor were likely to exist, to any dangerous extent; it would be a mere incumbrance, and it might become a nuisance to the Community.

And the existence of a Country thus happily circumstanced is not a gratuitous supposition, or a picture drawn from fancy; it is a supposition founded on facts, and the reasoning is confirmed by experience; for such, nearly, was the happy condition of our Colonies, before the Revolution in America. Their Legislative Assemblies were distinguished by their wisdom, their integrity, and, above all, by their inflexible fidelity to the interests of their Constituents. In Connecticut, the simple Right of Election was enjoyed by every Citizen, and it was exercised with exemplary purity, peace, and order. In Pennsylvania, where more disparity of wealth and less simple manners prevailed, this Right also was exercised, under a slight pecuniary qualification, and with a degree of cautious vigilance and public spirit which secured the purity of their Elections, and a constant succession of Assemblies distinguished by their ability and zeal for  
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the Public. For many years the venerable Franklin was annually chosen by his Fellow-Citizens at Philadelphia to represent them. He was chosen not only without expence, and without the trouble of a canvas, but even without any previous notification of his wish to represent them: and at that time, such was the jealousy of the Constituent Body there, such their anxious zeal to prevent the introduction of corrupt practices at Elections, that no man dared to declare himself a Candidate, and the act of soliciting a vote would have been the certain loss of his Election. \*

In such circumstances, the qualification under which the Right of Suffrage was exercised in Pennsylvania probably might have been abolished without inconvenience, and the first of social Rights might have been safely extended to every Citizen. But it seems evident that the Twofold Election could not have been introduced, or not without manifest disadvantage, in that Country. To the superior and more intelligent classes of Freemen there would have been a degrading restraint of their Right; to the middle and inferior classes there would have been a disgusting expence of time and trouble attending this mode of Election: it would have been offensive and wearisome to the whole Constituent Body; and, on a short trial, it probably would have been repealed, as an inconvenient regulation which incumbered their Elections without

\* These circumstances respecting the Elections in Pennsylvania, and the manner in which Dr. Franklin was chosen at Philadelphia, are asserted on his own authority.

increasing their purity, and might expose the public spirit of the People to be impaired or ruined, for no possible improvement of the Senate in either wisdom or virtue.

3. But it has been thought by judicious men, and a truly benevolent Patriot-Philosopher \*, that the regulation in question might be advantageously applied to a Community like ours, which has made considerable advances in civility, in knowledge, and in virtue; which has been accustomed to enjoy a considerable portion of Liberty; but which from a great variety of causes is become incapable of any farther advance in national felicity, without a Radical Reform which may remove those causes, or overcome their pernicious effects. And when such men have indulged a hope that in the Twofold Election a cure for the maladies of a State so circumstanced, and the means of higher improvement of the People might be found, their sentiments may justly claim for the measure in question a more particular examination.

It seems certain, then, that the introduction of Double Elections in such a Community would prevent those tumults which at present so frequently disgrace the Popular Elections of Britain. The Elections at the Primary Assemblies would be attended by few Voters, compared with the numbers at our great

\* Earl Stanhope blends in his character the merits of a sagacious and inventive Philosopher, with those of an ardent and disinterested Patriot. His political conduct stamps on his name the praise that he is one of the most virtuous Citizens of the Community. His discoveries in printing, &c. will rank him with those who have been the Benefactors of Mankind.

Elections,

Elections, even though the Right of Suffrage were unlimited; and they would excite no extraordinary zeal, because the object contended for would be of inconsiderable value; and therefore tumults at the Primary Assemblies would be nearly unknown. The choice of Representatives by the Electoral Assemblies would be interesting, but only to a small number of Electors; they would be separated from the great Body of the People, and secured from any unpeaceable contention by the paucity of their number, and generally also by the superior rank of the actual Electors.

In this view, therefore, the Twofold mode of Election seems to offer an advantage which cannot be denied. But quietness at Elections may be too dearly purchased; and the tumults complained of in British Elections, though disgraceful and disgusting, are not, however, productive of evils which extensively affect the public weal; and by the severity of our laws, duly exercised, they might be still more restrained.

Let then the Philosophic Friend of Liberty consider whether the value of the improvement, in this respect, is not far outweighed by the unavoidable consequences of this mode of Election: whether a lifeless and inanimate indifference would not usually mark Elections at the Primary Assemblies? And whether the change would not therefore tend yet farther to depress, and ultimately to subdue that energy of character, and that patriotic zeal, which, though in a declining state, still animate the  
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mals of our People; and which in every Community form that essential preservative without which Public Liberty cannot long be maintained?

It is admitted that public spirit is a virtue of which the British Nation is not entirely destitute; it even may be truly affirmed to possess it in a superior degree, when compared with the generality of Nations, ancient or modern. And yet it is the just complaint of our Moralists, that although examples of great patriotic virtue may be found in some individuals, still as a People we fall far short of our duty in this respect; that we are more deficient in public spirit in this age than in the last, and have been much excelled by the Americans of modern times, and by the Greeks and Romans of old. To what are we to impute these appearances, on the one hand so very unsatisfactory, and yet consoling on the other? That public spirit is not extinct, that instances of patriotic zeal are not of very rare occurrence among us, may justly be ascribed to the share, inadequate as it is, which the People still retain in the Government of their Country. By the Bill of Rights, acceded to at the Revolution, all have a direct concern, and a Right to interfere by Petition in the conduct of public affairs. By the Constitution, even in its now mutilated state, a considerable portion of the People, as Constituents, possess an immediate influence upon the House of Commons; and the maxims of our Constitution, though too often disregarded by Ministers and Parliaments, are authorities still

still favourable to the People and their Rights. Hence public spirit is found to exist among us, though in a state of decline, nearly approaching to dissolution: and again this state of decay, which threatens the extinction of public spirit, may be justly imputed to the enormous increase of the Patronage of the Crown, and to those frauds and abuses by which a great part of the Community have been deprived of any direct connection with Parliament, and are cut off from the dignified feelings of Freemen: while multitudes who retain their place, as Members of the Constituent Body, are yet exposed to extraordinary temptations, unknown to the Voters of former ages, and which, in the present, they are seldom able to resist.

To these powerful causes of the degraded spirit of the Nation may be added the growth of our commercial grandeur, and the territorial conquests of our East-Indian Company, with the concomitant evils of a gross luxury, and the selfishness which too frequently marks a suddenly-enriched Commercial Aristocracy. And in the latter part of the reign of the King, the most potent bane to public virtue has been administered by a Man, once its professed and devoted Friend; after that, too strongly tempted to govern by other maxims than those of Liberty, by other motives than those of patriotic zeal; who by profusion acquired an almost boundless influence, and who by the arts of delusion, or the rigours of a system of terror and coercion, misled or intimidated those whom he failed to influence.

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In this debased state of the public mind, from the joint effect of abuses and corruption, aided by the growth of a luxurious selfishness, and all the powers of delusion and intimidation, the anxious friends of humanity are aware, that some renovating plan must be devised, some noble effort must be made, to reanimate the Nation to the generous feeling of patriotism, or nothing will remain for Britain but to plunge into deeper corruption of manners, and a more complete apathy. What that plan, what those efforts ought to be, is the important difficulty, on the right solution of which depends the future welfare, or the utter ruin of our Country; its being sunk in hopeless slavery, or elevated to noble and still more noble feelings, and a capacity to advance to the highest felicity.

But before that question be decided in favour of any proposition of Reform, how ever specious, let it be examined whether it is a measure well adapted to rouse the People from their lethargic stupidity, and to inspire them afresh with that patriotic zeal which is so nearly extinct; and if that question must be answered with a negative, doubtless we shall have little reason to expect that public happiness can be promoted by establishing the mere forms of Liberty, without that vital spirit which alone can give them efficacy or permanence.

It is not sufficient for the success and glory of an Army, that the conduct of it has been intrusted to a skilful and intrepid General, assisted by Officers of experienced ability and courage; it is not sufficient that the great  
Body

Body of his Troops have been instructed in all the mechanical practices of war, in the dextrous use of their limbs and their weapons, and the performance of evolutions in the most approved mode of modern tactics. The skilful General knows that his men cannot be expected to make the utmost exertions they are capable of, although excited by the dread of punishment, the desire of promotion, and zeal for the honour of their Monarch: he wishes to add still more powerful incentives to heroism, and endeavours to inspire his Army with that passion for military fame, and that enthusiastic ardour for the defence of their Country, which prompt every Soldier to fight as if the victory depended on his individual prowess.

Just so it is with a Community. It may be governed by a mild and humane Prince, and he may be assisted by an intelligent and able Senate. Yet if corruption and other causes of malignant tendency have combined to degrade the character of the Community, it will be absolutely unable to recover that degree of mental purity and vigour from which it has fallen; and still more unable to make a continual advance to higher and higher improvements in national dignity and happiness, without some remedial Reform, by which corruption and the other causes of its degeneracy shall be counteracted and removed. But by such a Reform, the Community may be restored to those feelings of patriotism and honour, which, when duly regulated by rational religion, are to every People the principal

cipal spring of their felicity. The Philosophic Statesman will seek for that remedial Reform in measures calculated not to depress the minds of the lower classes of men, but to elevate them; to interest them, as much as possible, for the public weal, and to inspire them with sentiments of self-dignity and patriotic generosity. And having effected this primary improvement, he will rest satisfied that Liberty will be safe, and the Community will be capable of progressive melioration. But he will not expect these inestimable benefits from artificial refinements, which, like the tactics of an Army are useless, if not accompanied by the generous and manly virtues. He will not look for them in any regulation, how ever specious, how ever well contrived it may be to maintain peace and order, if yet it withdraw the Body of the People from the contemplation of those objects, and the practice of those duties which are fitted to excite and exercise their patriotic affections. Doubtless he will wish to preserve and cherish their love of peace and order, but he will anxiously endeavour also to inspire them with high conceptions of public virtue and true dignity; and if it could be in his power, he would ani-

\* In this consists, in a great measure, the superiority of Mr. Fox's system of internal policy, in a comparative view, with that of Mr. Pitt. The first tends to elevate the general character of the Community, the other to depress it. The first would preserve the Constitution in all its branches, by removing acknowledged abuses, restoring authority to the Bill of Rights, and conciliating to the King and Nobles the support of the People from their love; the other would preserve the Monarchy and the Nobles by supporting abuses, infringing the Bill of Rights, maintaining the precedent he had introduced, and forcing the People to bow to the Constitution, *unreform'd*, from fear.

mate every Freeman with an ardent but well-directed zeal to promote the welfare of the Public, and so to act as if on his individual efforts of Patriotism the fate of his Country depended.

But it is apprehended that effects directly opposite would be produced by the Twofold mode of Election, especially if every Citizen were allowed to vote: they would be worse than merely negative effects, barring future improvement: they would expose the bulk of the Community to more severe oppression: they would throw a more deadly damp on our almost extinguished ardour for Liberty, and hasten our downward progress to Slavery; for the Elections at the Primary Assemblies would be too unimportant to call into exercise any energy of character, or even in any great proportion to engage the attendance of the People. They would be slighted here, as they were slighted in France, and the right of voting at them would be felt to be little better than a nominal privilege; it would be a right which would often be unexercised from the apathy and neglect of those who possessed it; and it would more frequently happen, from the dependent state and servility of mind of many in the lower classes, that they would exercise their right amiss. From the influence which Property bestows in this Country, it may be concluded with reason that men in the superior and middle classes, at the Primary Elections, would usually obtain from their inferiors a majority of their votes; and men in the lowest classes would almost

almost never be elevated to the Electoral rank. This conclusion seems not to admit a dispute. For if the lower Voters in Britain, under the present laws of qualification, are accustomed to vote as men of influence around them recommend, even in Elections which confer a Legislative Power, it were highly unreasonable to expect that the same class of Voters, at Elections at which they would only exercise the power of voting for men by whom their Legislators should be named, would exert greater independence of mind than upon an occasion far more important. And this expectation would be much more contrary to reason, if Universal Suffrage at the Primary Elections were established, and a more numerous class of still lower persons were allowed to vote for Electors. The habitual effect, therefore, of the Twofold Election would be the almost entire exclusion of the lower classes from the Electoral Body; they would cease, in a great measure, to hold any connection with their Representatives, who would neither owe their seats in Parliament to their favour, nor would be liable to lose them from their displeasure, except by a circuitous operation, and a concurrence of causes which would rarely occur.

And hence, instead of inspiring the upper classes with sentiments of greater respect for those at the lower end of Society, this Double mode of Election would tend to produce a contrary effect. For men who had not been raised to the Electoral rank, could not be considered by the Members of Parliament as their Constituents, or only indirectly so; and consequently

frequently those Members would generally be inclined to pay more attention to their immediate Electors, to feel for them a greater respect, and to promote their interest and their wishes with more anxiety than the interest and wishes of men who were merely the Constituents of their Electors. And thus our Government would have a strong and constant tendency to oppress the most numerous part of the Community, and to favour powerful men by means injurious to the weak. Doubtless the Constitution is not always able to check this injurious tendency, even at present, when so considerable a number of men, in the lowest classes, share the right to elect their immediate Representatives. But those classes, when habitually deprived of their direct connection with the House of Commons, or retaining it in no sensible degree, would probably experience more oppressive treatment, and would find redress nearly impracticable.

And their almost unperceivable connection with the Legislative Assembly, which would be the consequence of the Twofold Election, especially on the most extensive principle of Suffrage, would bring with it, in a different direction, effects still more extensively pernicious. The habitual effect of that mode of Election, we have seen, would be almost entirely to exclude the lower classes from the rank of Electors. Instead, therefore, of being raised by this specious measure to functions of higher importance, and fitted thereby to attain higher degrees of moral dignity, freedom,

dom, and felicity, the inferior classes would be sunk to a still lower point of mental degradation. At present a considerable portion of those classes partake the Rights of Freemen; the Constitution invites them to look up to the Representative Body, to watch their measures, and to form a judgment of the conduct and character of the Body, and of its individual Members. It calls upon them to consider the public interest, and to act honestly with a view to promote it, in bestowing their Suffrages. And thus a part at least of those classes may, and certainly do, acquire ideas of public duty, and the feelings of Patriotism. But by the Twofold mode of Election a far smaller proportion of those classes would be accustomed to raise their minds to the consideration of the interest of the Community, and of their duty as Members of Society. The Constitution then would afford them no dignified employment, it would intrust them with no important duty to be performed, it would habitually intercept from their view every object, the contemplation of which could inspire them with generous sentiments of public virtue. Under such circumstances, elevation of character would hardly be attainable by men in the lower stations of life; and when once the manly and patriotic virtues had ceased to distinguish with honour the great Body of the People, and they had sunk into a state of general apathy and indifference, an ambitious Monarch might be tempted to invade their Rights, and too probably might succeed. But not the upper classes flatter

themselves with the hope, as delusive as it is mean and selfish, that their share of the Public Freedom, with their honours and peculiar privileges, could be safe when the spirit and character of the People were thus subdued, and their Rights were destroyed. A poor and hardy Nation may retain a share of partial Freedom, and its Aristocratic establishment may preserve its rank and power, when the inferior classes have been degraded and enslaved. Of this a proof may be found in the Spartan Republic. Wealth, real or fictitious, was unknown at Sparta; and gold, if offered to the manly Citizens of that Commonwealth, had no power to corrupt; they remained long free themselves, after the Helots had been degraded to nearly the lowest state of slavery. Even a rich and luxurious Nation, like this, may retain a share of Freedom, but with difficulty and hazard; for though luxury and corruption may have deeply tainted the ranks above, the middle and lower ranks may yet possess, though in a diminished degree, some part of its ancient vigour and energy. But were the lower extreme of Society by any means to lose its manliness of character, and to become enervate and of an abject spirit, while at the other extreme a selfish luxury had extinguished, in a great measure, the public spirit of our Nobles, the middle class, itself impaired in vigour by the contagious malady of the times, too probably would be unable to withstand the encroachments of Power, and alone to support the Constitution of their Country: the descent to slavery would be rapid,

rapid, and the ruin of the Country would be complete.

Such, in all probability, would be the pernicious efficacy of this regulation to degrade the bulk of the Community in ordinary cases; in quiet and easy times when neither misfortunes in War, nor internal distress and oppression in Peace had exasperated the minds of the People. But times of distress and danger would form an exception to the general tendency of the measure in question. The People would then become solicitous about the management of public affairs, they would scrutinize the conduct of individual Members, and form a judgment, often erroneous perhaps, of the measures of Government: they would complain aloud, they would claim redress, and the change of Ministers and their measures; but they would find their votes at Primary Assemblies gave them little importance, and their petitions would be disregarded. Their dissatisfaction would be increased by the disregard of their Rulers, and indignation would soon point out the cause of that contempt and its only effectual cure. They would demand to be admitted to an immediate connection with Parliament, to be allowed to vote, not for Electors, but for their actual Representatives, and they would no longer endure thus to be cheated by a device which defrauded them of their substantial security against misrule and oppression, by substituting a privilege of little value for the invaluable Right to elect their

Representatives\*. The difficulty to reject their demand would be great, and the Legislature would feel it; because the regulation itself, on the more extended principle, amounts to an acknowledgment of the Right of Universal Suffrage at simple Elections, even in the act of withdrawing it; it is in theory an establishment of the principle, while in practice it would destroy the benefit of it. In this dilemma, if the Right of Universal Suffrage at simple Elections were obtained by the lower people, it would be extorted from the Legislature prematurely, and when they were totally unfit to exercise it with advantage to the Public and themselves; and it would lead to ruin, by introducing Elections too disorderly and too tumultuous to be borne. Such, probably, in unquiet times would be the consequence of the measure in question, though contrived for the purpose that tumult and disorder might be altogether prevented. But if the Right of Universal Suffrage were refused, the refusal would too probably produce an increase of discontent which could only end fatally for the Community; for the formidable

\* At the commencement of the Revolution, the States-General of France had been laid aside for nearly 180 years.

The proposal of the Twofold Election therefore could not be offensive, in this view, to the French People; they could not feel it to be the privation of a Right which any Frenchman living had exercised. But in Britain the case is different. A considerable portion of the People here have enjoyed, for many centuries, the Right of simple Election of Representatives. The introduction of the Twofold Election in this Country would therefore be not only an innovation, but a privation also of the Right long enjoyed by that portion of the People. And on this account it has always appeared to the Editor to be an undesirable principle of Reform, even if the reasons stated against it in this Paper were deemed absolutely to want weight.

aggrandize-

aggrandizement of the power of France threatens our existence as an Independent People; it is absolutely necessary that we should be, what in a great measure we are, an Armed Nation. The complaining classes, therefore, would have arms in their hands; and, under these circumstances, to provoke their rage would be to excite a civil war, with all its terrible calamities. But if the refusal should not produce insurrection and consequent Revolution, if the malcontents should be overawed into passive acquiescence, under the privation of the substantial power of Elective Suffrage, they would of course be depressed by despair to that point of mental degradation, to that apathy and total extinction of public spirit which renders a Nation unfit for Liberty, and incapable to maintain it.

It may be granted, however, by some, that the tendency of the Twofold Election in quiet times to weaken and destroy the feelings of Patriotism in the lower classes, in angry times to inflame their passions to insurrection and revolutionary rage, is here rightly stated; and yet they may contend that the bad effects of this tendency are exaggerated, inasmuch as they would be counteracted and overcome, in quiet times especially, by the superior good effects of this regulation in a different direction, by the diminution of expence and corruption at such Elections, and by the superior wisdom of a Legislature so chosen. But experience affords no ground for presuming that expence and corruption would thus be diminished. On the contrary, it appears that in those

those places in which the Right of returning Members to Parliament has been monopolized by a few Families in the middle stations of life, our present Elections are not less expensive, or less corrupt, than they are in other places, in which the inhabitants at large enjoy that privilege and abuse it, in numbers tenfold greater. In the more open Elections of certain Towns, the integrity of the numerous Voters in low stations is overcome by a bribe comparatively small; the birth-right of such Voters is often sold, like Esau's, for a mess of pottage. In the more confined Elections in other Towns, a bribe \*, large in proportion to the diminished number and higher rank of the Voters, is applied with equal success. Under the Twofold Election, the case would be altered in one respect, but with increased disadvantage to the Public. The votes of the lower class at the Primary Elections would be obtained by influence, as those of the lower Freeholders, &c. are in our present Elections. But the majority of the men who were chosen to be the actual Electors of the Members would usually be of the middle class; they would be of that description of persons which is at present least exposed to temptation, and least tainted with corruption. But under the Twofold Regulation, this honourable distinc-

\* As an instance of this, a large Town in the North of England may be adduced; in which a number of persons, between 30 and 40, in easy circumstances, have monopolized the Right of Election. At an Election there some years ago, a sum exceeding £9000 was spent by a single Candidate. It was distributed among the Electors in sums of £300 to each Elector, and this Large's carried his Election.

tion would cease to be theirs. Corruption would change its plan of attack; it would forbear, in a great measure, to purchase the suffrages of men too insignificant to be raised to the rank of actual Electors; it would reserve its Largeesses for those who had been, or probably would be raised to that rank; the boon would be dealt out to fewer persons, in larger sums, and it would be dealt out with success. Worthy Patriots would attempt to punish the offenders, and check the growing evil, but with little effect; the guilt would be secret, and would usually evade detection; detection would often not lead to conviction, and the convicted offender would be unabashed. The progress of corruption would be unchecked, till it had spread its poison to the very core of Society. And then the evil would be too general to be concealed, too inveterate to be cured or corrected by Laws. Such would be the probable consequence of this measure, in the degenerate state of our Society at present. And thus by spreading the unhappy taint farther and farther into that body of men hitherto least infected with it, the Twofold Election would more completely prepare the whole Community for degradation; and the Patriot would feel that he had lost the best ground of his hope, that by the superior integrity of the middle class the Nation may yet be saved from bondage.

But still it may be contended, that an advantage which would be sufficient to countervail the disadvantages which have been stated as the probable result of this mode  
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of Election, and would render it, upon the whole, advantageous to the Country, would be found in the superior wisdom of a Legislature so chosen. But who that recollects the many eloquent Orators and able Statesmen who have been the Leaders of contending Parties during the long reign of the King, can admit that there is force in this remark, or can expect from the efficacy of the Double Election an infusion of greater wisdom and ability into our Parliament? But were it evidently rational to expect this consequence, still the Speculator would look in vain to a Parliament so chosen, for the means of restoring Liberty, and elevating the moral character of the People. The effect of the Twofold Election we have seen, if it were in force in this Country, would be noxious in each of these respects; and if the People were reduced by this regulation, generally, to a state of indifference for Liberty, and to a character of mean and corrupt servility, no radical correction of abuses, no effectual stop to corruption could be expected from the spontaneous zeal of Parliament, even though it were distinguished by the greater ability of its Members. The just complaint at present is, not that there is a deficiency of wisdom in our Parliaments as they are now chosen, but that they lack impartiality, and a due sympathy with the Public; they lack the zeal and integrity of their Ancestors to watch the conduct of Government, and to protect the Rights of the People. But the refinement of Twofold Election would be ill adapted to remove the  
cause

cause of that complaint : we have seen that it rather tends to corrupt, than to reform, those who make the laws, and those who are bound to obey them.

It will not be denied, that, in the usual course, the happiness of individuals is proportioned to their moral excellence, more especially to their social and religious virtues. The happiness of Communities, therefore, must depend upon the same causes; for it is nothing else but the aggregate of the happiness enjoyed by the individuals of whom the Communities are composed. If then any Nation be governed on a principle of vice or corruption, it may be a rich, it may be a potent, but it cannot be a happy Nation; or not so happy as it may hope to become by means of Reform. Under an amended principle of Government, it may advance in dignity of character, and in the capacity for social freedom and happiness. But to expect such an amendment in the principle of its Government from the mechanism of the Double Election, and the consequent increase of ability in the Senate, were to expect what they can never perform. A spontaneous Self-Reform in a corrupt Assembly seems inconsistent with the supposition that it is necessary; it implies the presence of those generous and patriotic virtues which the Assembly is stated to have lost.

But a Reform may proceed from the influence of a virtuous People operating upon the conscious feelings of the Assembly. No Reform, however, can be successful, at least not permanently so, but by means equally fitted

fitted to preserve the patriotic virtues of the People, and to restore the purity of their Representatives. Let the patronage which forms the fund of corruption be retrenched, that Parliament may once more be pure and independent of the Crown; let Parliament be more intimately connected with the Body of the Nation, that it may sympathize with it, and may be revered and beloved again; let abuses in the Boroughs be corrected; let the Taxed Householders be admitted to Elections; but let simple Representation and publicity at Elections be ever retained, as the best means to nourish that ardour for Public Freedom, and that manly generosity of character in the People, without which the wisest regulations must be ineffectual, and the degradation and final servitude of the Nation must be unavoidable. Yet still, so perilous is the crisis, that not even these efficacious Reforms in our Civil State can prevent the loss of our Liberty, if not accompanied by improvements in our military establishment, which may inure the People to arms, and enable them securely to rest the defence of their Rights and their Independence chiefly on their own military prowess. Wise Reforms may prevent our sinking into deeper corruption, and finally becoming *willing Slaves*. But another danger more immediate threatens our ruin. The state of Europe has been altered by the successful ambition of France; and the enormous increase of her military power will compel us to depart from the practice of our Ancestors, and to oppose the immense Army of the

the Enemy with an Army of our own in some degree proportioned. The augmentation of our military force may be indispensably necessary; but if we must exceed the narrow plan of their military establishment, we should exceed it without departing from the wise maxims on which they formed it. To be free, like them, and to transmit our Freedom, as they did, to Posterity, we must adhere to their principles, and act in the spirit of their constitutional jealousy. The whole Nation must be entrusted with arms, and accustomed to use them. The Volunteers have done us noble service, and on their energy and patriotism the grateful Country securely relies\*. But, disbanded with the Militia at the return of Peace, what Armed Force would they leave, but a Standing Army augmented to a frightful power either to save or destroy the Commonwealth? Shall we expose our Laws and Liberties to be borne down by the resistless recoil of that machine which has lately overthrown those of France, as it before had overthrown those of Rome? Shall we expose ourselves, unarm-

\* By the report of the New Minister (Mr. Pitt's Speech in Parliament on the 8th of June, 1804, as given in the Newspapers) he appears to have stated that on his plan the Army for unlimited service would amount to 140,000 men, and the Army for limited service would be of equal magnitude. On disbanding the Volunteers and the Militia, at a Peace, the Army for limited and unlimited service would amount to 232,000 men. Let it be supposed that a reduction of this force to 116,000 men would also take place; and let the Lover of his Country reflect, whether the introduction of a Military Government would not be the necessary consequence of admitting this enormous increase of our Military Peace Establishment, unless the Body of the People were legally entrusted with arms.

ed, to be governed at the mercy of our Regular Troops? Or shall we guard ourselves against this most dreaded evil with the wise jealousy of a Trenchard, a Chatham, and a Saville? On the answer to these questions hangs the fate of our Country. If any competent portion of their magnanimity remains in our bosoms, the question will be answered by us as in such a perilous extremity it would have been answered by them: Abuses will be corrected; and the Nation will be armed. And thus the Community will avoid the guilt of Political Suicide and a voluntary annihilation of Freedom on the one hand; and, on the other, will be safe from forcible subjugation to the yoke of an Enemy abroad, or of a Military Despot at home.

THE END.

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